SCRUTINY

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

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F. R. LEAVIS DENYS THOMPSON

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PREAMBLE TO A GREAT ADVENTURE

We'll cut the cackle about attainment
And overhaul the chassis and accessories.
You are accustomed to wear a reticulated
Monocle and see the earth in
Strategical areas ; acquire
A habit of thinking of men as a
Fluctuating pattern in fours. Your
Ears have been established from birth
As delicately graduated filters, and your range
Of wave-lengths severely limited, but do not
Forget the efficacy of cotton wool.
I should advise you to instal
A panatrope in your lungs furnished
With tungstyle needles and twenty
Long-playing records guaranteed by
A professorial committee to perpetuate
The national gentlemanly sporting spirit
Of test matches and military tattoos.

Make no mistake about colour.
Offered an array of bonbons at a fashionable
Tea-party select the pink carmine-filled,
Toy with the white and show a marked
Distaste for gamboge and chocolate.
(Tactful hostesses indeed omit the last.)
Tricoloured hard centres are perhaps
To be preferred above all.
It is a precautionary measure
With many employers to submit applicants
To an automatic phonetic tester which
Deletes those not favoured with a cleft palate.
But this for you is an easy hurdle.

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Turn yourself daily on the new lathe
Distributed gratis with every penny newspaper
Through the personal beneficence of
Directors of the leading armament firms ;
Strive to shape the grooves as spirals
Flowering into the upper air—
An image antique, beautiful and Greek ;
The chemist will supply you with a ballast
Of explosive pellets for your nerves.
If your mind generates timid leprosies,
Slimy nightmares, or any other form
Of thought, give it a scouring with
Some healthy narrative of life
In the Foreign Legion.
Endless probings along corridors, sudden
Drops towards cess-pools, the embrace
Of giant squids are common derangements:
Cure them with the Book of the Month.

Make ready the firm unseeing mind
And the strict co-ordination of muscle, pack
The hypodermic syringe.
There is no dialectic but death's,
And the spider weaves over tomorrow.
There is no grasping of Valhalla,
No mitigation of purgatory,
No merging into Nirvana,
But allegiance to the wind that is sown
And joyful faith in the whirlwind that shall be reaped.
Man maimed and bleeding is a symbol
Firing us against calumny, yet of all
We do not exact heroics. For the high
There are glittering prizes,
And the low have some honour. Sacrifice,
The quiet submission to bacilli,
To throttling, lung-rotting gases, to the great
Will of the people, we readily accept.

RONALD BOTTRALL.

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PROPAGANDA AND RATIONALIZATION IN WAR

WITH the certainty that any future war will depend enormously on propaganda—for both its initiation and its prosecution—the idea is naturally strong that resistance to propaganda might provide one at least of the many bulwarks that are needed against war. Or, better, that resistance to *war* propaganda is needed. Propaganda as such can hardly be resisted wholesale ; other people's opinions and persuasions, supported by little or less proved fact, fill too important a place in our lives for that to be possible. But propaganda for a particular end might be resisted, and it is worth while asking what it would mean to resist war propaganda ; how simple or complex an undertaking it might be.

It is tempting as an optimistic beginning to forget that we are still the same people who in the last war found mass enthusiams infectious and believed the atrocity stories. But the permanent appeal of adventurous comradeship in a good cause can hardly be doubted by anyone who remembers the premature vacation of Cambridge in 1926, when vast numbers of students went off to break the general strike. Would they have gone less readily if the dangers had been greater and the enemy a foreign power? Who can suppose it! Fortunately the consequences weren't so serious then except that some were said to have got syphilis. As for atrocity stories we have—most of us—the more recent evidence of our own impulses to credit the stories of Nazi concentration camps for Jews which extremely responsible papers published. They may have been true ; but the evidence in support of them was not one tenth as impressive as the apparatus of affidavits and circumstantial details which supported the famous Bryce Report in our last war. Naturally we are all sceptically impervious to propaganda until the circumstances which produce it have arisen.

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Only one book that I know of has attempted to treat the psychological nature of war propaganda at all systematically: H. D. Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (Kegan Paul, 1927). As a systematic study it is comparatively rudimentary, but for its collection of material and its cool good judgment in presenting it this book is invaluable. Almost all the information in this article is drawn from Lasswell, though not always with the implications that he gives it. Among other books that bear on the topic are Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* and J. A. Hobson's *Psychology of Jingoism*. F. E. Lumley's *The Propaganda Menace* (1933), though useful on general propaganda, has admittedly nothing to add to Lasswell on the propaganda of war.

Lasswell tends to countenance the simple notion that there are just two distinct parties to propaganda: the propagandists and their public. And in cruder minds this soon amounts to the idea of propagandists as machinating bogies who deliberately lure away the public from its own peaceful courses. Lasswell's material, however, suggests that the situation is much more complex than that. In particular one has to distinguish between the witting propagandist of popular imagination (who does admittedly exist) and the well-intentioned rationalizer of his own war-favouring opinions who is indistinguishable from the public he forms part of. Of the former kind an example is the British intelligence officer who invented the story of the German corpse factory (Lasswell p. 207, Ponsonby p. 102). Consider, on the other hand, the following quotation from Lasswell (p. 91): ' In what purported to be a scientific treatise on the *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (London, 1917), Trotter solemnly said, " The incomprehensibility to the English of the whole trend of German feeling and expression suggests that there is some deeply-rooted instinctive conflict of attitude between them. One may risk the speculation that this conflict is between socialized gregariousness and aggressive gregariousness." ' It is unlikely that there was any conscious dishonesty in this rationalization of Trotter's, and although, as Lasswell sees, it has the same *effects* as witting propaganda, it ought nevertheless to be distinguished from that. The same applies to the justification of their nation's part in the war by academic people on either side, and the idealistic interpretations of the

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war given by musicians, educationists, and the clergy. Lasswell quotes many examples of this, recalling for instance how ' German scholarship leapt to the colours in the last war in the famous and unforgettable manifesto, signed by ninety-three of her most illustrious intellectuals ' (p. 51). He notes too (p. 73) that ' It was of some advantage to the war party in Britain to have such a statement as the following, from the Bishop of Hereford: " Such a war is a heavy price to pay for our progress toward the realization of the Christianity of Christ, but duty calls, and the price must be paid for the good of those who are to follow us. That better and happier day when the people now under militarist rule shall regulate their own life is doubtless still so far away that an old man like myself can hardly hope to see it dawning, but amidst all the burden of gloom and sorrow which this dreadful war lays upon us we can at least thank God that it brings that better day a long step nearer for the generation in front of us." (London *Times*, August 12th, 1914).'

Between the extremes of witting propaganda and unconscious rationalization lie the many cases where official propagandists take advantage of circumstances that have arisen spontaneously. Governments abstain from denying useful false rumours that have been generated unofficially ; aid is given to organizations in neutral countries which have tended to favour the belligerent's cause ; distinguished people are encouraged to visit neutral countries and help a cause which they no doubt want to help in any case. ' All countries found that an effective carrier of propaganda for their cause in America was the titled foreigner who said nothing whatever for the public prints, but who talked privately and casually of the war. The sheer radiation of aristocratic distinction was enough to warm the cockles of many a staunch Republican heart, and to evoke enthusiasm for the country which could produce such dignity, elegance and affability.' Britain was especially adept in this method. ' A sidelight on the method is contained in a letter from Sir Edward Grey to Theodore Roosevelt, dated September 10th, 1914: " My dear Roosevelt—J. M. Barrie and A. E. W. Mason, some of whose books you no doubt have read, are going to the U.S. Their object is, as I understand, not to make speeches or give lectures, but to meet people, particularly those connected with universities, and explain the British case as regards this war

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and our view of the issues involved." ' (Lasswell, p. 157). Evidence of this kind—and Lasswell offers heaps of it—puts it beyond question that much activity which is indistinguishable in effect from completely witting propaganda must be regarded as the public's spontaneous justification of an attitude that it is—or wants to be—committed to.

How the original committal to a war attitude comes about obviously involves problems that are too large to be even touched on here. In any case it is advisable not to look for causes of war but to consider instead predisposing conditions—economic, political, psychological—in the absence of any of which war would be less likely. On the psychological side two factors, both significant for the propagandist, have received most attention ; first, the aggressiveness of human nature ; second, the unaccustomed but extremely welcome sense of unity with others which a common enemy produces.

There need be no doubt that aggressiveness is a usual compound of human nature, and it is plausible to suppose that without a background of habitual competitiveness and aggression in both individual lives and international relations there would be no war. There is clearly enough brutality and venom in ordinary lives to prevent our feeling any incredible discontinuity between people at ' peace ' and at war.

The second psychological fact—the sense of unity which war can bring—is very widely agreed on ; many people who (consciously) shrink from the brutalities of war are nevertheless conscious of some satisfaction in being members of a warring nation. The sense of unity is possible, of course, because a *simple* aim has become comprehensive and urgent enough to involve everybody. ' For the preponderating majority in any community the business of beating the enemy in the name of security and peace suffices. This is the great war aim, and in single-hearted devotion to its achievement they find that " peacefulness of being at war," of which Principal Jacks once wrote. In 1915, he glanced back over the first twelve months of the Great War, and observed that " the life of Great Britain has been acquiring a unitary aim of purpose. The aim itself is warlike ; but it has been attended with some increase of mental peace." ' It is not merely that peaceful civilized lives involve immense strain as a direct result of their

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complexity ; there is also the less direct penalty that as our activities grow more complex so it becomes increasingly difficult to find sympathetic understanding and genuine social sanction for them. The direct strain of complex activities and the secondary strain of pursuing them in a largely indifferent social setting are alike relieved by war.

With the possibility of war in sight the task of the propagandist and rationalizer is pre-eminently to simplify ; the complexities of life must be swept away for the defence of some simple fundamental which nobody can question. The leaders of the country and their semi-official propagandists naturally have to manipulate the facts before this impression can be convincingly conveyed, but experience suggests that their work is always partly done for them: people are craving just that sense of unity for which propagandists are providing an excuse. It seems of great significance that among the events preceding a war fervent appeals for unity among classes and parties should make their appearance as promptly as they do. ' As early as the 29th July, 1914, [when *The Daily News* and other papers were still vigorously opposing British entry into the war] the London *Times* called upon all parties to " Close Ranks." The Kaiser united his people behind him, when he declared that he knew no party more. The Fascio came in Italy and the " Union sacrée " was proclaimed in the French Parliament. The sensational appeal of Gustave Hervé to the ranks of Labour was broadcasted far and wide. Hervé was a notorious *sans-patrie* who had belittled patriotism as an implement of capitalistic exploitation. On the very brink of the War he changed the name of his paper, *La Guerre Sociale*, into *La Victoire* and pleaded with all the ardour of his fervent spirit for unity . . . ' (Lasswell, p. 55). An interesting point here is that this appeal for unity seems to have been effective at the first hint of a common danger and was even worth making some time before the majority of people were convinced of the danger they stood in. Lasswell ignores this point and in fact implies (p. 54) that the call for unity comes only after hatred of the enemy has been aroused ; but the dates of his quotations from the English papers suggest that this is not so.

It seems at least highly probable that an unconscious craving for unity will partly account for the collapse of opposition from

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discontented parties and races which characterized the beginning of the last war. It might even be argued that those who are already attached to a highly coherent sub-group with well-defined aims may be particularly susceptible to mass movement ; their appetites have been whetted for unity and the conviction of rightness. Dame Ethel Smyth's account (in *Female Pipings in Eden*) of the suffragettes' feelings at the beginning of the war is relevant to this. She describes the readiness with which most of the suffragettes switched over their enthusiasm from one simple cause to another—this one so simple as to blot out the difference between them and the rest of the community. She and Mrs. Pankhurst were in France, and she writes:

> ' . . . we were none too certain that England would come in ; and I remember feeling that if she didn't, there would be only one thing for an English woman stranded in France to do—leap off those cliffs into the sea . . . Mrs. Pankhurst declared that it was now not a question of Votes for Women, but of having any country left to vote in. The Suffrage ship was put out of commission for the duration of the war, and the militants began to tackle the common task.'

Mrs. Pankhurst's abandonment of the complexities of judgment was felt by her friends to have gone too far a little later when she plunged into a scheme for looking after the illegitimate babies which were beginning to accumulate ; but she had always been ahead of her followers.

The simple unifying aim which was provided for the English at the beginning of the last war was that of safety. ' Masterly appeals to the national interest, after the style of *The Times* on 31st July, were necessary to carry conviction to the more articulate elements of the community that Germany should be treated as an immediate and overwhelming menace. It argued:

> " A German advance through Belgium to the north of France might enable Germany to acquire possession of Antwerp, Flushing, and even of Dunkirk and Calais, which might then become German naval bases against England. That is a contingency which no Englishman can look upon with indifference

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> . . . . Even should the German navy remain inactive, the occupation of Belgium and Northern France by German troops would strike a crushing blow at British security . . . '' ' (Lasswell, p. 52, shortened).

A phenomenon that reflects, and probably reinforces, a sense of unified activity against a vividly realized danger is the spy mania which occurred in the early days of the war in most countries. ' The peasants of Germany were excited by the wild tales of yellow automobiles which were supposed to be dashing from France across Germany, laden with gold for Russia. They stretched iron chains across the roads and made it unhappy for many a poor tourist. Military despatch riders in Great Britain were frequently stopped and lodged in gaol during the feverish days of the War. The spy mania is a great inconvenience to many people, but it helps to arouse the community to a deeper sense of the necessity for joint action in the crisis ' (Lasswell, p. 106).

For the more cultured members of the nation the simplicity of the immediate aim offered to the country has to be shown to be nevertheless in the service of quite subtle ideals. Appeals in the name of democracy against military despotism and appeals for the sacredness of international law helped in the task of justifying the last war in the light of the ideals of peace. ' H. G. Wells may be taken as an example of the pacifistically inclined Liberal, more gracefully articulate than most, whose support of the War came at the cost of inner struggle, and whose enthusiastic aid in a prolonged contest depended upon an elaborately rationalized cluster of war aims . . . Wells, of course, saw in '' German militarism '' one of the most colossal obstacles to the achievement of a better world order. His attitude of mind is precisely the one to be striven for by the inventor of war aims ; set up an ideal which will arouse the enthusiasm of those elements in the nation whose support is desired, and make it clear to them that the chief immediate stumbling block is the military enemy. This permits the scrupulous to kill with a clean conscience ; or, at least, to admonish the younger to do so.' (Lasswell, p. 62)

That intellectuals should give way to a popular war stampede ought not to seem inexplicable, for nothing is easier to dissociate from the rest of one's life than intellectual activity ; we all know,

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for instance, how human most university people are in private.[1] In their decisions to get engaged, to get married, to furnish such a house in such a way, to have so many children, which games to play, which pictures to like . . . their special training plays a negligible part—except indirectly, in that it has placed them in a roughly defined social class whose standards they accept. Independent *feeling* on an issue like war (when the moment really comes) must be illusory after a life governed socially ; and skill in independent *thinking* will at that moment mean only that they demand, and are able to supply, more impressive rationalizations than most. Their services to peace, like those of the churches, can only be made while the community regards war as unthinkable. This was aptly enough put, from a different point of view, in *The Sunday Pictorial* for April 21st, 1935:

> ' Our trade union leaders, fancy Socialists and pink Pacifists may get away with " blah " so long as the average householder foolishly believes that war has been exorcised for ever. But once the grim fact is openly discussed by Government that organized murder from the skies, called war, is a possibility really to be reckoned with, like income tax or the water rate, then the flabby, etiolated jungle growth of Socialist fallacies tends to wilt to extinction.'

Once people have begun to consider the possibility of fighting for future security or moral necessity or liberty, the intellectuals, like the churches, have the ground cut from under their feet: they are in the position of T. S. Eliot when he wrote in *Time and Tide* for January 12th, 1935, ' I am not prepared to admit that the nominal motives (which were probably in part the actual motives) of a great many participants in the Crusades were wrong. I do not see how at the time anything could have checked me from a whole-hearted support of the Crusades . . . '—' . . . except

[1]The war record of Cambridge University is vigorously displayed in *Cambridge University and War*, a pamphlet of anti-war propaganda prepared for the Co-ordinating Committee for Research into the Use of the University for War (Price 6d., printed by Heffer's, Cambridge).

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such knowledge of the human heart as would lead one to anticipate what did happen: for actually, of course, the Crusades turned out a thoroughgoing disgrace to Christian Europe.' The change—where I have made a break—from the preciseness of an irrelevant Foreign Secretary to the comment of an outsider is significant. There are not many who are sceptical enough to acquire such knowledge of the human heart (except in superficial cynicism). And there are fewer still who can retain it when to do so debars them from wholehearted fellowship with others—fellowship in a cause whose ends are unquestionably good and whose means most convincingly inevitable.

Whether the sense of unity in a good cause is necessarily linked up with the aggressive aspects of war is a moot point, and not all the evidence goes to support the psycho-analytic theory that it is. That theory has received wide publicity from Edward Glover's *War, Sadism and Pacifism* and it cannot be overlooked in an attempt to understand war propaganda. A convenient statement of the analyst's general position is given by Susan Isaacs (*Social Development in Young Children*, pp. 252 and 253):

> 'The reciprocal relation between loving one's friends and hating one's enemies can be plainly seen in many sides of ordinary social life among adults, too. The most impressive example is patriotism in war time. The flame of national devotion burns far brighter when men's hearts are drained of hatred and aggression towards their own countrymen by the common enemy.' But '. . . more then a mere *displacement* of one's hostile feelings from friend to enemy is involved. The mechanism of *projection* is also at work. The hated enemy is not only a substitute for the friend; he is a scapegoat, too, a representative of *my* bad self. *It is he hates my friend, not I.* I hate and condemn *him* for his hate to my friend, and feel justified in doing so by my own loyalty.'

More readily accessible evidence agrees with the psycho-analytic view that sharing a single urgent aim will remove much of people's everyday aggressiveness towards each other. What is not so certain is whether all this aggressiveness has to be directed towards the

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enemy. It is conceivable that a non-aggressive common concern might have the same unifying effect if it were urgent enough ; the serious illness of the King some years ago produced much this effect in England, and even Christmas festivities do it in a smaller way. An argument of this sort would of course merely amuse many analysts, owing to their doctrine that aggressiveness is an innate and constant component of human nature, not contingent on particular strains and thwartings, so that if it isn't aimed here it must be aimed there. But that is a disputed doctrine, not yet accepted as dogma even by all analysts (*cf.* R. Money-Kyrle, *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, January, 1935). On the whole it is reasonable to wait for further probing of the aggressiveness and hatred of a warring nation. It is there, of course, but many people must feel that in our own last war it had a certain unreality, a theatricality, which deserves more understanding.

As far as the propaganda of the war can provide any relevant evidence it is not altogether favourable to the view that sadism (in the wide, loose sense) was fundamental to people's attitudes. Although Lasswell talks of propaganda mobilizing hatred against the enemy, the instances he quotes obviously don't encourage any simple hatred, but rather disapproval of the enemy and moral indignation. As he suggests, it was a prime article in the British propagandists' faith that we were acting more in sorrow than in anger. The only instance Lasswell gives of an expression of fairly simple hatred is the German Hymn of Hate.

For other evidence of the sadistic gratifications of warring nations he is forced to turn to the Boer War. At that time, it appears, the British public did feel jubilant at the suffering of the enemy. J. A. Hobson speaks of jingoism fed by ' the most violent appeals to hate and the animal lust of blood,' and quotes Kipling's line:

' Good killing at Paardeburg, the first good killing of the war.'

Lasswell continues, ' In the fever of combat the news of the slaughter of enemy non-combatants is apt to be met by the exulting cry that the " whelps and dams of murderous foes " are no more, to quote a chivalrous line of Swinburne, when he heard about the frightful mortality in the concentration camps for Boer women and children in South Africa.' (p. 84). It is interesting that in

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making this generalization Lasswell refers to the Boer War for instances and quotes none from the last war. In the same context he is in fact noting that while France and Britain expressed horrified indignation at the bombing of civilian towns by the enemy they suppressed the news of the efficacy of their own air-raids on German towns. Similarly the British encouraged newspaper reports of the horror of gas-warfare until they had perfected their own poison gas ; after that, instead of exulting in their own success in this field, they hardly commented upon it. It is true, of course, that the whole of British propaganda aimed at interpreting its cause as one of humanitarian ideals against barbarism, but it is still strange that there was not more spontaneously generated jubilation at cruelty, if the war situation releases simple sadistic impulses on a large scale.

One very prominent aspect of propaganda, atrocity stories, suggests indeed that civilians were satisfying their sadistic impulses in much the same indirect way as they do in peace-time, when newspaper reports of horrors enliven their Sunday reading. It is interesting to note that the authorities did not need to invent all the atrocity stories or even encourage them ; the stories of the nurse whose breast was cut off and the sailor who had a cobra tattoed on his face were invented by the alleged victims and spread all through the British populace in spite of official discouragement. (Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime*, pp. 67 and 99). In fact it seems worth while asking tentatively whether individual people's expression of their aggressiveness and sadism are really so markedly different in peace and war as the psycho-analytic view seems to require. The question ought to be left open. And for the time being it seems safer, in considering psychological factors favourable to war, to emphasize not so much the redirections of aggressiveness that *may* occur, as the abandonment of conflict and strain at home which undoubtedly does occur, at least in the earlier phases of war.

Lasswell's work is based almost exclusively on the experience of the last war, and the probability is that the propaganda of any future war will be very different. If war came soon, for example, it would probably be interpreted in England as a miserable necessity in face of a miserable *impasse*, reluctant acceptance soon being

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worked up into grim determination. Neither jingoist nor idealist arguments would play much part ; argument, in fact, would be deliberately limited to ' we're in it and there's no way out.' It is an attitude that would grow naturally out of sayings like that of Mr. Baldwin: ' I do not think there is a worse sign of the times than that the sacred subject of Peace should be dragged down into the political arena.' (Reported in *The London Pictorial*,[1] March, 1935). Let us solemnly agree that we all want peace ; but don't let's argue how to get it or there may be unfortunate recriminations when we have to go to war.

War in the remoter future, however, might be worked up from entirely different attitudes. The wide range of public feeling within which war aims can be effectively held is suggested by the difference between the Boer War and the last war in the degree of brutality that could be gloated over in public. It is illustrated too in the withholding of official sanction from all aims of national aggrandizement in the last war, and the consequent withering of territorial ambitions. The interests of both neutrals and allies made that necessary, and there were actually public statements that no territorial extensions would result from the war. And in fact although a large extension of the British Empire did occur (Ponsonby, p. 165) the British public as a whole knows little about it. It is difficult to believe that the desire for self-aggrandizement could not have been made to seem a powerful national motive if the propagandists had wished. It is a further illustration of the extreme plasticity of minds exposed to official propaganda ; of which still another instance was the remarkable *volte-face* of our accepting the Tsar as an ally in the war that was to save democracy.

On the other hand it seems unquestionable that the official programme of a war for humanitarian ideals was forced on the leaders of the country by their knowledge of public feeling—or rather that as representatives of that public at that time any other sort of war would have been unthinkable to them personally. (It is not inconsistent with this that when the time came they should also further less altruistic national ambitions. The political leader

[1]*The London Pictorial* is a paper that shows the prosperity of the country under a national government. It is priced at a penny and distributed free in some parts of London.

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must be not only his country's right hand but its left hand as well—and the right hand mustn't know what the left is up to.)

A campaign of war propaganda, then, appears to be a genuine folk product. Its general outline undoubtedly arises from a wide public setting, but the official propagandists who have to fill the outline and make its details square with the necessities of the international systems that their public forms part of—they must resort to devices which are more easily concealed from the public than justified to it. It is because propaganda is so much a folk product that it can be so opportune and so subtly adapted to the momentary state of its public. Hence, too, the uselessness of warning people against any particular kind of propaganda stunt. All that we can be sure of is that if war comes it will, whenever it comes, appeal to good, simple motives—to the spirit of genuine and self-sacrificing fellowship in a good, simple, necessary cause. Those who resist it can find support only in that ' knowledge of the human heart ' which T. S. Eliot spoke of, in the certainty that no one's safety will be secured by war, and in the conviction that the nations we know will never be at war over ideals that are worth fighting for.

D. W. HARDING.

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APPROACH TO ARIOSTO

IN the eighteenth century an acquaintance with Italian literature was usual, so that there is no room for surprise that Baskerville should have elaborately printed the *Orlando Furioso* in 1773, any more than that Tonson should have published the *Gerusalemme Liberata* in 1724. When Mathias, after printing in 1802 Crescimbeni's Commentaries and a three-volume anthology of Italian lyric poetry, sponsored in 1803 the reprinting of Tiraboschi's *Storia della Poesia Italiana*,[1] he was catering for the same cultured public. Indeed, like all history of literature prior to the nineteenth century, Tiraboschi's work presupposes an acquaintance with texts: the critical judgments that it propounds are rare and slight, its main concern being the elucidation of obscure biographical details. So much is this so that it might well be called a History of Italian poets rather than of Italian poetry; and it is obvious that such a history, ably written and full of good sense in sweeping away fables accepted by the credulity of earlier writers, could only appeal to those whose interest in Italian poetry was already established. But its English publication came at a time when, for various reasons, this tradition of interest was disappearing. The English gentleman continued in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century to ornament his library with editions of the Italian poets, but he gradually ceased to read them.

The middle of the century, I think, forgot Italian poetry; and its rediscovery was not due to a reappearance of the same tradition, nor indeed to a purely literary interest. The Pre-Raphaelites discovered Dante and the Vita Nuova: the historians discovered the Renascence. Consider the difference between Roscoe's Lives of Lorenzo and Leo X, and Symonds *Renaissance in Italy*. Roscoe's work is born of his enthusiasm for his subject, it is cultured, leisurely, sympathetic and enriched with considerable erudition; it is full of divagations away from the main theme, prompted by the pleasure which he took in such excursions.

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Symonds on the contrary endeavoured to pin down the whole of the Renascence—its history, its vulgar and Latin literature, its art, its social conditions—into one vast compilation. The starting point is entirely different, and the result much less attractive. Nevertheless Symonds' tremendous labour might have been of some profit had he not started with a hopeless *parti-pris* against the Renascence. It is not that he doubted the brilliance of that period, but that he belongs to that unfortunate northern type of mind which suspects a brilliant civilization of being unusually immoral, and finds unsuspected moral virtues in a dull social mediocrity. History (especially middle-class history) has the unpleasant knack of leaving in relief the more lurid episodes ; it is true that we should not dream of labelling our own times from our reading of the *News of the World*, because we have as a corrective a certain even tenour of life around us. But it is tempting in the case of the past to ignore or deny the existence of such a tenour, especially when, as in the case of the Renascence, there is a plentiful supply of crimes, real and imaginary, to fill our canvas. That such a tenour existed in the Renascence is already probable from the immense literary and artistic production, and it is obvious to anyone who will take the trouble to read some of the minor productions of the period. Many of the collections of letters can be taken as evidence of such a tenour of life.

But this is not the impression received or given by Symonds: for him it is a glittering age full of the Borgia's poisons, vice in high places, blood and fire. 'Meanwhile amid apparent civility of manner, the violent crimes of a corrupt and servile race were frequent. Poisoning and secret assassination, acts of personal vengeance and the employment of hired cut-throats rendered life unsafe in that idyllic Italy.'[2] Does not such a remark serve rather to give us the measure of our Nordic superiority than to help us to understand the Renascence? 'What the cold churches of Palladio are to Christian architecture, this frigid epic (Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis*) is to Christian poetry.'[3] This is more significant still—it is the setting up of the Gothic style as more Christian than the neo-classic, of the protestant north against the pagan south. It is evident that Symonds' opinions on the Renascence in general are as unacceptable as Ruskin's on its art ; and we can only be grateful to him for that immense tedium

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which enshrouds his many pages and buries his volumes in the duller corners of public libraries.

The tradition, then, was dead: there was no Baskerville to reprint the *Furioso*, nor any public to appreciate it. It is true that in the forty odd pages which Symonds devotes to its analysis there is much praise ; he even says some things that can be quoted with full approval: ' Nor again is there any languor in his poem. Its extraordinary swiftness can only be compared to the rush of a shining river, flowing so swiftly that we have to measure its speed by objects on its surface. The *Furioso* in spite of its elaborated rhetoric, in spite of its accumulated images, is in rapid onward movement from the first line to the last. It has an elasticity which is lacking in the monumental architecture of the *Divine Comedy*. It is free from the stationary digressions that impede a student of *Paradise Lost*.'[4] But nevertheless he concludes: ' Even allowing for the laxity of Renaissance manners, it must be conceded that he combined vulgar emotions and a coarse-fibred nature with the most refined artistic genius. Our Elizabethan drama, in spite of its crudity, contains nothing so cynical as Ariosto's novel of *Jocondo*. The beauty of its style, the absence of tragedy in its situations or of passion in its characters, and the humorous smile with which the poet acts as showman to the secrets of the alcove, render this tale one of the most licentious in literature.'[5] If Hoole in his translation ' transmuted the gold of Ariosto into lead,' surely Symonds may be said to have turned it into lead-poisoning! There is moreover in that vulgar phrase ' the secrets of the alcove ' (of which, *caro lettore*, you will find few in the diverting Canto XXVIII) all the stern puritan determination to exclude the realities of physical existence from works of art, while at the same time placing a somewhat prurient emphasis upon them.

Nor has Ariosto been much more fortunate since ; while there has been no fear of our forgetting the primacy due to Dante, while Dante and Machiavelli have been the subjects of thin essays by T. S. Eliot (*The Sacred Wood, For Lancelot Andrewes, Dante*) Ariosto has had the attention only of the general writers of Histories of Italian literature—the effect of which on the English public has been probably negligible, and of a rather voluminous biography by Edmund G. Gardner, with the title of *Ariosto, King of Court*

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Poets—an unhappy phrase which evokes something like a poetical Rigaud. It belongs also to the wrong type of book to create much enthusiasm amongst those to whom Ariosto is a name or even less. And in using the epithet ' thin ' for Mr. Eliot's essays on Dante and Machiavelli, I intended no disparagement—they are indeed equally admirable for the initiated and the uninitiated—but merely a contrast with the ' fat book.' The first in its approach to literature seems to me as valuable as it is rare—a distillation of critical judgment purged of superfluities ; the second—a distressingly frequent kind of book—offers a well-padded biography, gossipy, enlivened with anecdote, but uncritical and acting as a sentimental substitute for a reading of the author concerned rather than as a stimulus. I do not wish to suggest that Professor Gardner intended or produced a *vie romancée* ; but I find it difficult to decide in the biographical part (which constitutes the bulk of the book) whether contemporary history is introduced so largely to give light to the details of Ariosto's life, or whether the poet's biography has not been treated rather as a peg on which to hang a summary history of the time. This lack of clarity in the author's intentions has expanded the first part to uncomfortable length. Nor can I feel that the critical section dealing with Ariosto's poetry is much more happy, since it concerns itself mainly with the vicissitudes and moral welfare of the principal personages rather than with the nature of the poetry. Bradamante, we are told, is no ' virago,' but ' human ' and ' lovable ' : Angelica, ' a heartless coquette,' finds her ' soul's salvation ' in the arms of Medoro. It is difficult to see what useful purpose such remarks can serve.

I am not convinced either that such books as *Italy : A Companion to Italian Studies* can assist greatly—in general or in particular—in a rekindling of enthusiasm. Their scope is too vast, the splitting of subjects between a team of experts means that each is concerned with facts and not with principles ; while the space allowed to each section is so small that the interest is centred on the skill with which the compression is carried out. And that interest belongs properly to the person acquainted with Italian Civilization and not to those seeking its acquaintance.

I imagine then that to the majority even of educated Englishmen Ariosto is a stranger, a name quoted in notes to Spenser, or recalled in dictionary definitions of rhodomontade. Yet there is

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no poet who could serve as a more suitable introduction to Italian poetry, or more capable of exciting that enthusiasm with which he himself is fired. 'I racconti dell'Ariosto mi rapiscono fuor di me stesso, e mi accendon nel seno quell'entusiasmo di cui son pieni ; sicchè a me non sembra di leggere, ma di vedere le cose narrate.'[6] It is my desire to afford a stimulus, not to offer a guide ; I hope then that the incompleteness of what follows will be forgiven me.

The *Furioso* is a long poem, and it has become customary to find, amongst the intricate pattern of its episodes, a unifying principle either in the theme of the struggle between Charlemagne and the pagan forces, or in that of Ruggiero and Bradamante. Both of these are indeed strings that traverse the whole poem, and as such important ; but it is evident that any unity that depends on the tying of episodes on to a main string can produce at the best the effect of a box of Tunis dates. Nor do I think it necessary to insist on so obviously artificial a unity at the risk of suggesting that the texture of the poem is loose. There are at least two unities in the *Orlando Furioso*: there is first the fusion of a vast and episodic whole to form one supremely animated pattern. And I can best illustrate this by reference to Tasso ; without, however, any desire for a long digression on the rival merits of the romantic poem and the heroic epic. Tasso is a Veronese among poets: his tempo is slower and more deliberate, less entrancing, if no less lovely than that of Ariosto. Moreover, the very nature of his poem demands that it shall not be episodic. Tasso does however introduce episodes that are only loosely concerned with the main action ; and of such a kind is the story of Sofronia and Olindo which occupies the first half of the second canto in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. To avoid misconception, let me state first of all that I consider it an extremely beautiful story. Its beginning is relevant to the main purpose of the poem, since Ismeno's removal of the image of Our Lady to a Mohammedan mosque is an attempt to preserve Jerusalem, by resort to magic, from the Christian onslaught. But if it springs from the main action of the poem, it does not fall back into it, but ends with the departure of Olindo and Sofronia into exile—a departure which, necessarily, has no consequence in the rest of the poem: the story of the pair is complete in that one half-canto. But this detachment, or semi-

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detachment, is not part of the *Furioso*. Madame de Sévigné remarked that there was always something beginning or ending in Ariosto ; but it must be added that these endings never finish anything, that they are always furnished with tentacles which reach out to a new beginning, which is not a beginning but a continuation. Nor is there anything in Ariosto more delicious than the impertinence with which he cheats us of conclusions and entices us on:

> ' La donna vecchia, amica a'malandrini,
> Poi che restar tutti li vide estinti,
> Fuggì piangendo, e con le mani a'crini.
> Per selve e boscherecci labirinti.
> Dopo aspri e malagevoli cammini,
> A gravi passi e dal timor sospinti,
> In ripa un fiume in un guerrier scontrosse ;
> Ma differisco a ricontar chi fosse.'[7]

This adhesive quality of the episodes in the *Furioso* could be infinitely illustrated ; but it would fail of its effect if the episodes were discordant among themselves. That it does not fail is equally obvious to any reader of Ariosto. There is therefore an emotional unity (which Croce defined tautologically as an ' altogether Ariostesque harmony ' without greatly illuminating it). But the analysis of this harmony seems to me very simple. And it is here that his advance over Boiardo is most notable: the latter adopted in the *Orlando Innamorato* all the magical apparatus of the Arthurian romances. With a naïve enthusiasm for the wonderful he placed his characters in extraordinary situations with a virtuosity which I find very pleasing. Ariosto's handling of the same matter is quite different. As in Boiardo, the ordinary physical laws that govern our existence have no power in the *Furioso*. We feel no embarrassment at the appearance of the Hippogriffin or of an enchanted castle ; but it is not a mere question of supernatural devices—we feel equally little embarrassed when Angelica

> ' Quel dì e la notte e mezzo l'altro giorno
> S'andò aggirando e non sapeva dove:
> Trovossi al fin in un boschetto adorno,
> Che lievemente la fresca aura move.'[8]

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Nor of course does she feel any hunger—and her fatigue on this occasion (' Da la via stanca e da l'estiva arsura ') is a device to ensure her overhearing Sacripante's lament ; it disappears at the sound of his voice. But if the physical world of the *Furioso* is an ideal one of enchantment, a sort of ' hic ver assiduom et alienis mensibus aestas,' there is no unreality of emotions, there is never any sentiment which can be considered monstrous or inhuman. Boiardo's poem, with all its freshness, lacks this poise ; it is without the consistent emotional atmosphere which warms the whole of the *Furioso*, because Boiardo lost control over his heroes in the extraordinary adventures which he imagined for them. That is why the reading of the second poem does not leave us with the impression of having dipped into a book of fairy stories. That is why the introductions to Ariosto's cantos—with their often elaborate development of some moral truth, never seem to be mere extraneous graces to the poem. The background may be an enchanted world, but the enchantment of the foreground is that urbanity of Ariosto, to which has also been given the rather misleading name of irony.

' O gran bontà de'cavalieri antiqui!'

he says, with a smile in which there is no bitterness, certainly no self-righteousness, but a serene acceptance of human society. It has been argued that the *Furioso*, like the *Arcadia*, is an escape into a dream-world to compensate for the woes of the contemporary situation: such a view seems to me to belittle falsely both the poem and the man. The *Furioso* is the work of a poet whose verse is capable of the tenderness of a Virgil, and who had the breath for his vast undertaking.

I have made no attempt in this slight paper to provide a biography of Ariosto or even a guide to the *Orlando Furioso*. The first seems unnecessary until one has some interest in the man ; and for the second there is no guide comparable to Ariosto himself. But since it is my desire to secure some acknowledgment of a poet to whom lip-service is rare enough, I may be allowed to indicate a few editions. Hoole's translation and others can be found in any second-hand shop, and should be left there. There are many modern editions, of which Salani of Florence (Edizione Florentia) produces perhaps the one that combines cheapness with

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some at least of the more acceptable qualities in book-production ; Laterza of Bari (Scrittori d'Italia) print the poem better, but at greater cost. It is often indeed cheaper, as it is also more satisfactory, to search for and discover one of the editions in which, in an age of culture, our ancestors admired ' il divino Ariosto.'

J. H. WHITFIELD.

NOTES.

[1]In four volumes, representing the relevant chapters from Tiraboschi's long *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* (13 vols. Modena, 1772).

[2]*Italian Literature*, pt. II, p. 456.

[3]*Revival of Learning*, p. 342.

[4]*Italian Literature*, pt. II, p. 18.

[5]*ibid.*, p. 35, and for a fiercer indictment see his footnote.

[6]Tiraboschi, vol. III, p. 252, ed. 1803.

[7]*Orlando Furioso*, canto XIII, st. XLII—a quotation made almost at random.

[8]*ibid.*, canto I, st. XXXV.

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A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE HIGHER JOURNALISM

IN an article which appeared here (Dec., 1933) stating the case for a serious weekly, some assertions were made about the journalism of a hundred years ago. A complete history of the press of the last century would make a very impressive background against which to silhouette the present plight of journalism. People who insist on this plight (if ever they meet with argument) come across the objection that used to be raised by the vested interests on the defensive—' Things were always the same.' There is room in a few pages to show that they weren't.

The reviews of the first quarter of the century drew life from an educated, responsible and homogeneous public, to which they gave expression and coherence. Of the *Edinburgh Review* Scott said, ' No genteel family can pretend to be without it,' and Carlyle that it was ' a kind of Delphic oracle and voice of the inspired for the great majority of what is called " the intelligent public." ' In 1832 an old Lincolnshire squire assured Tennyson's father that ' the *Quarterly Review* was the next book to God's Bible.' About 1820, in a population of twenty millions, Blackwood's ' *Maga* ' and the *Quarterly* had between them a circulation of 31,000, the *Edinburgh* 7,000, and other journals from 200 to 4,000. If one allows two or three readers for each copy, it means that at least one reader in two hundred read a first-rate review, of a quality now unapproached. The rates of payment were thus always adequate and often high. Tom Moore refused an offer of ' some hundreds ' from Murray the publisher ' to become the editor of a Review like the *Edinburgh*,' while Jeffrey, to induce Moore to contribute for the *Edinburgh* on any subject he liked, increased to thirty guineas the standard rate of twenty guineas a sheet[1] for contributions of the first order. Such rates ' stimulated

[1]In the *Edinburgh*, eight pages.

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every brain, and half convinced the world that Poetry, Romance, Philosophy, and even Criticism, were the first crafts and the most profitable in the world.' A full account of the facts of the period is given in A. S. Collins' *The Profession of Letters* (see also Elton's *Survey of English Literature*, 1780-1830) and of their significance in *Fiction and the Reading Public*. It need hardly be added that the spirit in which the reviews were conducted was very different from anything we know. If at times they were excessively ferocious, they united in condemning any kind of fraternizing among writers. Blackwood's own '*Maga*,' for instance, slated a book in which he had invested money, and the *Edinburgh* published Carlyle, though his views were repugnant.

'The whole surface of society, James, is thus irrigated by a thousand streams . . .' Thus North, in *Noctes Ambrosianae*, is made to describe contemporary journalism; and a hint of the range of the reading public is thrown out by the contributor to *Blackwood's* who thought that the inadequacy of his article would be compensated by its appeal to 'practical people, the trading interests, and the middle classes.' The *Edinburgh* was read in homes where the Noncomformist conscience banned Shakespeare, and the provincial papers used to quote the reviews. Their power was accordingly great: it was said of the *Edinburgh* that 'to have the entry of its columns was to command the most direct channel for the spread of opinions and the shortest road to influence and celebrity.'

Below the reviews in the early part of the century teemed such light-hearted enterprises as those of Hunt and Cobbett, political in purpose, and in one case very powerful. The first editor of the *Spectator*, commenting on the engagement of Hunt and Hazlitt to prop the *Atlas*, said, 'Their very names would sink the *Atlas* fifty per cent. were the undoubted fact known—for, in my day, we looked far more to the support of the Clergy, the Army, etc., than the classes for whom Hazlitt and Hunt write.' The age was fortunate which had a literary underworld of this kind, for Cobbett's journalism is literature, Shelley's *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* appeared in the *Examiner*, and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* in the *Indicator*. Politics were not divorced from literature: the brothers who ran the *Examiner* thought 'patriotism and literature the only things worth living for.' Similarly, the

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reading public was not yet stratified, for Hunt was pressed to write for the *Quarterly*, and both he and Hazlitt were welcome contributors to the *Edinburgh*.

The idea of the army as audience for a paper of intellectual pretensions sounds odd now, but the instance cited above is not unique. Smith, Elder, a versatile exporting house, would 'be hard at work at one time fitting out a crack corps of Horse for a little frontier campaign and at another packing a post-chaise with the latest number of the *Quarterly* or *Edinburgh* to catch a fast East Indiaman off Deal,' though in 1827 Blackwood had been able to congratulate himself that his '*Maga*' 'was almost the only magazine that is read or heard of in India.' (A few pages later he reports that the officers of the Indian Army 'stand far higher as literary men than the officers of the King's Army'). Military men were also among the contributors to the reviews and Macaulay, apropos of circulating libraries for colleges in India, enquires 'Why should we grudge a young officer the pleasure of reading our copy of Boswell . . . or Marmontelle's Memoirs?' Later, when the *Pall Mall Gazette* was sold over the editor's head, he 'resolved to start a newspaper, and went to the Garrick Club to think the matter over quietly. To his astonishment and intense gratification drafts and cheques and promises of support kept pouring in . . . [Among the visitors was] an unknown officer from the Guards' Club with £1,100 hastily subscribed there.' £104,000 was collected in a day. The Army is only one of the classes which no longer exist or no longer come into contact with anything living in their literature.

In the third quarter of the century there were four outstanding journals. The *Saturday Review*, started in 1855, 'did more to create journalism as a profession than would be believed at the present moment, when journalists are recruited from all classes. It was understood . . . that it was written wholly by university men. The paper assumed a manner of authority [and] heaped derision on the shams of the time.' (*Autobiography* of Sir Walter Besant, p. 92). And Leslie Stephen (*Some Early Impressions*) reported that the writings of G. S. Venables 'seemed to be judicial utterances from the loftiest readings of culture, balanced, dignified, and authoritative . . . What Venables' articles really did, I suppose, was to embody in finished and scholar-like style the

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opinions prevalent among the most intelligent circles of the London society, of which Holland House had been the centre in the preceding generation.'

The *Cornhill* (1859) had, according to St. Loe Strachey, ' the quality of originality. It hit exactly the popular taste, and in a very short time it was selling by the hundred thousand.' But its character changed when Leslie Stephen gave up the editorship. A declaration of Strachey, who succeeded, is a sinister suggestion of what was happening: ' I felt sure there was good copy . . . in the great criminal trials of former ages . . . In the nineties we were all talking and writing about " human documents," by which we meant memoirs, autobiographies and above all diaries, which, when written, were not meant to see the light, and in which the naked human heart was laid bare for inspection ' (*Adventure of Living*, pp. 195-6). Before Strachey improved the paper, its 90,000 subscribers had been content to read the articles which were collected in *Culture and Anarchy,* sauced however with a serial novel.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* was started in 1865 as a twopenny evening paper, and was at its best under John Morley's editorship. Frederic Harrison wrote for it, and Arnold's *Friendship's Garland* first appeared there. But people complained that the *P.M.G.* was 'too incessantly strenuous, earnest, etc. [They] want more relief.' And when W. T. Stead took over the paper, they got it. With the Expansion of Empire as one of its planks it became ' invariably the most readable paper in London ' and ' the liveliest thing in journalism England had ever seen.' Of the ' Truth about the Navy ' campaign, F. W. Hirst wrote (in *Six Panics*) ' The year 1884 deserves attention as the beginning of a most disastrous expansion in naval armaments in which the provocative impulse has too often been furnished by Great Britain.' Stead was ' actuated probably by no worse motive than an irresistible desire to be the centre of a journalistic sensation.' It seems worth spending rather more space on the *P.M.G.* because the change of editorship to Stead was prophetic. ' Let us strive and scream, for tomorrow we die '—and Stead added 3,000 to the 10,000 circulation that Morley had reached.

The *P.M.G.*'s progressive editor was an ignorant vulgarian.

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' He had . . . no general knowledge of art or history, philosophy or science . . . and it was consequently impossible for cultured minds to get into any sort of effective contact with his except on the crudest common ground.' And his biographer writes, ' It may well be considered what our journalism would have been without him. The roots of some of the finer things which came to a crop under the hand of Northcliffe are to be found, as he agreed with me more than once, in the work and visions of Stead.' Northcliffe was ' in his younger days much indebted to Stead for valuable help and counsel.'

The *Fortnightly Review*, founded in 1865, and for a time edited by Morley, had ' a marked place in the history of our periodical literature, as well as in the diffusion and encouragement of rationalistic standards in things spiritual and temporal alike.' It helped to provide a centre ' for the best observation of fresh flowing currents of thought, interest and debate.' (*Recollections* of Lord Morley, Vol. I, p. 85). Its miscellany of writers presented ' a sinister unity '—including Arnold, Swinburne, Meredith, D. G. Rossetti, Bagehot, Huxley, Pater, Lewes, Frederic Harrison, Leslie Stephen, and others.

Other periodicals were *Macmillan's* (circulation at one time nearly as large as the *Cornhill's*), *Bentley's Quarterly*, *Temple Bar* (an imitation of the *Cornhill*), the *National Review*, the *Parthenon*, *St. Paul's Magazine*, and the *Nineteenth Century*, in imitation of the *Fortnightly*. The *Westminster Gazette* started in 1892.

Nineteenth century biographies show that the higher journalism was an important factor in the life of the time. Rintoul said that to the provincial press the *Spectator* supplied ' much of its matter, and considerably influenced opinion.' In her *William Blackwood and his Sons*, Mrs. Oliphant reported of the reviews that ' the country papers quote numerous extracts . . . I have known twenty provincials quote anecdotes from the same article.' Governments looked to the *P.M.G.* for guidance, and of two of its editors, Greenwood and Morley, Mr. J. A. Spender writes, ' They were appealing to a select audience of politically instructed readers, who in those days were the makers of opinion, and from whom an immense influence radiated outwards to the multitude. And above all journalists read them and founded other articles

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on what they wrote.'[1] Journalism in fact fulfilled one of the functions of a church. Writers of the time frequently referred to this aspect of it, and according to their biographies several of the higher journalists had thought of taking orders—Leslie Stephen and Frederic Harrison, for example. Of Morley, typical of the old journalist who made a decent living and spent a useful life, Stead wrote, 'To him a newspaper was simply a pulpit from which he could preach.'

This suggests another justification of nineteenth century journalism. It provided many intelligent people with a livelihood and an opportunity of using their talent without feeling that it was wasted. Others kept themselves by journalism till their books gained recognition. Carlyle was helped by the *Edinburgh*, Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* came out in *Tinsley's Magazine*, Gissing refused work for the *P.M.G.* and *Fortnightly*, Sir Henry Maine was for a time kept going by the *Saturday Review*, while H. D. Traill gave up an inspectorship of returns for journalism and Mrs. Oliphant sent a family to Eton on the proceeds of her writing. 'I joined the great army of literature,' Leslie Stephen wrote, 'because I was forced into their ranks, but also with no little pride in my being accepted as a recruit.'

Journalism gave expression to the best minds of the time, though not merely to brilliant individuals, for (as George Eliot noted) 'the lively currents of thought and discussion explain the speed and apparent ease with which writers dashed off articles and reviews—they came from a fund acquired by social intercourse.' But on reading the essays collected from nineteenth century journalism one is left with the impression that first rate minds were rare

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[1]In *My Early Life*, Mr. Winston Churchill writes of the 'nineties: 'Politics seemed very important and vivid to my eyes in those days. They were directed by statesmen of commanding intellect and personality. The upper classes in their various stations took part in them as a habit and not as a duty. The working men whether they had votes or not followed them as a sport. They took as much interest in national affairs and were as good judges of form in public men, as is now the case about cricket or football. The newspapers catered obediently for what was at once an educated and a popular taste.'

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indeed. Arnold alone is eminent. Most of the essayists seem to be second-rate, rather than 'minds of the second order.' So few of them approach Arnold's percipience of the tendencies of the age. Even the best critics—Leslie Stephen, for instance—are insufficiently aware: he believed in the 'vox populi,' and it is significant that his best books are his *magnum opus, English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, his *Pope* and *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*—for except in date he belongs more to that century than the nineteenth. Frederic Harrison seems to have been one of the alerter minds; his controversy with Arnold (by which he is chiefly remembered?) does not do him justice. He bears re-reading better than most of his contemporaries, better than Morley, for example. The main run of journalists at the time seem to have been of a rationalist strain bred from Mill, of whom Morley wrote 'The better sort of journalist educated themselves on his books, and even the baser sort acquired the habit of quoting from them. He is the only writer in the world whose treatises on highly abstract subjects have been printed during his lifetime in editions for the people, and sold at the price of railway novels.' They used the vocabulary of Progress, though not as grossly as the *Times*; we find even so intelligent a woman as George Eliot observing, with America in mind, 'Is it not cheering to think . . . that the higher moral tendencies of human nature are yet only in their germ?'

The liberal-rational journals died or compromised without much fight. One cannot help speculating what might have happened if there had been more publicists of Arnold's quality. (Incidentally, Mr. Wells has said that if we had paid attention to Arnold we might have avoided the War). The social-economic changes which asphyxiated them could not of course have been arrested, but if there had been a more general consciousness of the process of civilization among the journalistic middlemen, a periodical or two might have been saved, and the goodwill and sense of responsibility of their readers might have been mobilized. Journalism may have been 'the Church of the nineteenth century,' but it had not the organization, and the possibility of tradition, which makes the most moribund church potentially alive.

The disintegration of the reading public has been described elsewhere, but perhaps it is worth pointing out a few landmarks.

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In 1881 *Titbits* was started, followed in 1888 by *Answers*; *Pearson's*, the *Strand* and the *Daily Graphic* followed in 1890; the *Daily Mail* started to run in 1896, and the *Daily Express* four years later. How perverted was the taste for literature by 1912, and the nature of the new appeals are indicated by this quotation from J. M. Dent, about his *Everyman*: 'I had long wanted a journal which should help people to know the value of literature in everyday life, not a critical journal such as the *Athenæum*, or other literary journals, but one of an interpretative, appreciative character, such as would tempt the reader to explore. It was . . . to be cosmopolitan.' The *Everyman* type has by now almost completely replaced the *Athenæum* kind. The latter was perhaps the last journal to give regular employment to first rate critics—some of Mr. Murry's best work appeared in it—and its fate, along with the *Nation* and the *Week-End Review*, is too recent for more than mention.

The War destroyed the last vestiges of the nineteenth century tradition in journalism, by increasing the demand for cheap stimuli, and supplying improved machines to meet it. 'Before the War there were four penny and two halfpenny evening papers in London, and a well-marked line divided the penny from the halfpenny. The former catered for the supposedly educated classes; the latter appealed to the multitude . . . At the end of the War the difference in price was obliterated. All the commercial advantages now fell to those with the largest circulation, and the life of the others became increasingly difficult and financially impossible . . . the *Westminster* was converted into a morning paper, the *P.M.G.* and the *Globe* ceased publication, and the *Evening Standard* circulates in the same wide field as its penny contemporaries . . . London now has only three evening papers approximately of the same type, whereas before the War it had six—and at a still earlier date eight.' This is from Vol. II of Mr. J. A. Spender's *Life, Journalism and Politics* (p. 133), and is followed by an excellent account of the economic starvation of the liberal press.

A characteristic of the nineteenth century press is that an interest in politics, when it occurs, is not divorced from intelligent attention to the arts. It is early evident in the declaration (quoted above) of the Hunts about 'patriotism and literature.' Later we

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find Frederic Harrison agitating for a nine hour working day, and writing about Trade Unions and strikes, while at the same time intelligently critical of Tennyson, Carlyle, Ruskin and Macaulay—' the great penny-a-liner.' The dissociation of the arts from practical concerns, evidenced in the scientific and technical pursuits of ' Mechanics Institutes,' did not affect the higher journalism till the appearance of such editors as St. Loe Strachey. (The *Times* is an exception ; apparently it always did act as a ' drummer ' for Progress. *cf.* the quotations in the March issue). His *Spectator* in its early days at least ' regarded all the arts as a sub-department of morals or utility . . . all poetry as a disease of pubescence ' ; it was shocked by the Brontës, but welcomed Kipling and Henley. Without sensitive attention to literature, it is difficult to see how a journal can preserve any kind of centrality: and for what that lack means, consider the hopeless dissipation represented by the ' middles ' of the contemporary *Spectator*, the inability to evaluate the various manifestations of human energy.

The *Manchester Guardian* has not been mentioned yet, because it is not a liberal journal in the sense I have been using the word (*cf.* the beginning of the previous paragraph). It is a product of the specialization which the last century developed. Though it was founded as a weekly over a hundred years ago, there are very few allusions to it in the memoirs of nineteenth century publicists, and it does not appear to have taken part in the (non-political) controversies which were fought out in other papers. One gets the impression that its best work was in the political-economic sphere, and this is confirmed by reading Mr. J. L. Hammond's *Life of C. P. Scott*. The journalists whom I have mentioned had time for reading, reflection, and above all social intercourse, especially if theirs was a long-interval periodical. Scott on the other hand was swept into the editorship of a daily at the age of twenty-five, and never had the time to develop himself evenly. He was all-absorbed in keeping the machine going—no time was left for other interests. ' The bare daily routine of the office takes up the whole of my mind and thoughts. I have none left for general culture, none even for the special culture required by my profession, but little for society . . . ' For the work of editor demanded that he should be intimately acquainted with a growing diversity of topics. Perhaps it

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is fair to suggest that this one-sidedness had something to do with his confidence in Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George ; but it certainly accounted for his optimism about the law of progress. In this way the character of the *Manchester Guardian* was determined ; and though Mr. Hammond in an interesting page (52) endorses the claim that some of Scott's contributors ' gave to the *Guardian* what was meant for mankind,' it is impossible to be impressed by his list of contributors.

The *Guardian*, too, provides a type of the higher journalist (twentieth century model) in C. E. Montague, sharply contrasting with the essayists mentioned above. His biographer describes one of his subject's stories as ' serious, and uplifted,' and very fitly, a taste for mountaineering accompanied the uplift—' More than anything except war, climbing satisfied his thirst for adventure . . . the spirit and poetry of the heights pass into his books.' So in 1914 he joined up with juvenile enthusiasm in, of course, the Sportsmen's Battalion. Virile and idealistic, he had the heart of a boy.

The new types of higher journalist, the inception and development of their careers, open an interesting field for comparative study by the literary biologist. Frederic Harrison ' arrived ' by writing in the *Westminster Review* an article on ' Neo-Christianity ' : it was by a skit in the *Oxford Magazine* that Montague attracted the attention of his editor—whose own maiden appearance in the *Guardian* had been an account of a boat-race on the Seine. Compare the early works (at university age) of Mr. Priestley and Sir John Squire. Mr. Murry, on the other hand, was an extremely good critic before he was called to a more manly sphere. And can Mr. Gerald Gould of the *Observer* be the same who fourteen years ago wrote for the lamented Labour Publishing Company a pamphlet called *The Lesson of Black Friday : A Note on Trade Union Structure*?

DENYS THOMPSON.

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THE SCOTTISH BALLADS

AS we have them in the Collections, the Scottish Ballads are poems chiefly of the eighteenth century. That they are quite different from other poems of that century may at first occasion surprise, but has its explanation. On the other hand it has been denied (by the primitivists[1]) that they are poems of that century at all. It has been argued that there is no reason to suppose they did not come into being centuries earlier than the century in which they were written down. It has also been observed (that is not difficult) that a good deal of the ' material ' used is ' Mediæval.' But a poem and the language it is in are one and the same. Translated it either becomes a new poem or ceases to be a poem at all. It is sufficient therefore to point to the language the ballads are in, which in most cases is at the point of development it was in the eighteenth century. (This is not merely a matter of language but of sensibility. The ballads taken down after the beginning of the nineteenth century show a distinct modification of sensibility). Certainly the ballads are traditional. But so also is every poem—in its own degree.

I have isolated the Scottish Ballads from the other ballads in Child's Collection for the purposes of this consideration. Child includes several: *Judas, St. Stephen and King Herod,* which belong with Mediæval verse. *Robyn and Gandelyn* is fifteenth century, and the finer of the Robin Hood Ballads also are rather earlier than the Scottish Ballads. The broadsheets that fluttered across the English country from the printing presses of ' the town ' are more nearly contemporaneous with the Scottish Ballads. Scotland seems to have suffered less than England from the broadsheet contagion, being at that time less exposed, though nowadays newspapers, in Scotland as in England, have long since superseded ballads and broadsheets both. There are comparatively few Scottish Ballads in Percy's *Reliques*. But it was in Scotland that the Collectors of the eighteenth century found their finest poems.

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[1]I have read through the discussion on the origins of the ballads again but I did not discover that it shed much light upon these poems themselves.

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The Scottish Ballads and the English Ballads are not wholly distinct from each other, but both are distinct from ' literary ' English verse. The simultaneous existence of two distinct types of verse points to the simultaneous existence of two distinct traditions. But that is no reason for supposing, as has been done, that the oral tradition (represented by the ballads of the Collections) and the ' literary ' tradition were distinct to begin with, since an examination of the ballads themselves, their metre,[1] their conventions, shows them to be not Mediæval verse certainly, but a development, a ' popular '[2] development, from Mediæval verse. They were the verse which entertained the largely unlettered ' people,' and they possess in themselves a life distinct and apart both from the ' literary ' verse they were contemporaneous with and from the Mediæval verse they are a development from.

The Scottish Ballads therefore are, as every poem is, new and at the same time old. They are late (later, I think, than has been held) in that they belong mostly to the eighteenth century, but late also in that they bear on themselves the mark of a long ancestry. They are stiff with a Poetic Diction. To illustrate this Poetic Diction with an exhaustive list of phrases—*yellow hair, cherry cheeks, lily-white, rose-red, clay-cauld*—would be superfluous ; the ballads themselves are the composite illustration of it: any analysis of the ballads is necessarily an analysis of it. Its strength is that it is to a considerable extent a stylization of popular speech. It is ' simple ' : it is ' sensuous ' : and it retains something of the vitality of popular speech. Its most evident ' limitation ' as an artistic medium is perhaps its intractability to the expression of subtle shades of perception, its ready formation of simple, and at moments brutally effective, contrasts:

> And clear, clear was her yellow hair
> Whereon the red blood dreeps

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[1]Since metre of this sort was not introduced into English verse (from the French) until the fourteenth century, the ballads must have undergone surprising structural, as well as linguistic, changes, if one adopts the ' primitivist ' view.

[2]' Most of these ballads,' says Bishop Percy of his *Reliques*, ' are of great simplicity, and seem to have been merely written (sic) for the people.'

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not only in colour:

Shool'd the mools on his yellow hair

When therefore the late eighteenth century began looking for a poetry which should be 'simple, sensuous, and passionate,' it certainly found such in the ballads. What fascinated the late century were these 'natural' qualities and not merely that here was a Poetic Diction different from the prevailing Poetic Diction and therefore 'fresh.' Bishop Percy in his introduction to his *Reliques* (1765) is still apologetic, but he indicates clearly enough what he, and his contemporaries, supposed were the merits of the ballads.

> 'In a polished age, like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them. Yet have they, for the most part, a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics[1] have been thought to compensate for the want of higher beauties, and, if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart.'

The description is to a certain extent just. We can all of us recall lines in the ballads which affect us suddenly and sharply (to express it more strongly than the Bishop) with an apparent utmost enonomy of means. Yet once the stylization of the diction, especially in certain of the Scottish Ballads, is perceived the impression is more generally one of 'artificiality.' It will be sufficient to refer the reader to the finer of the *Twa Sisters* (*Binnorie*) variations. But the precise degree of conventional richness of one couplet from one ballad

The bride cam tripping down the stair[2]
Wi' the scales o' red gowd on her hair

cannot of course be appreciated unless one remembers the recurrences in other ballads of 'brides,' ladies who 'cam tripping down the stair,' 'red gowd' and adorned 'hair.'

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[1]He names 'Mr. Addison, Mr. Dryden and the witty Lord Dorset' in a footnote.

[2]*Hind Horn.*

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This Poetic Diction is built into a Rhetoric—partly by means of repetitions.[1] The *Gil Brenton* (*Cospatrick*), the *Cruel Brother* and the *Babylon* variations come first to my mind as exemplifying it. What it indicates is the adaptation of speech to something outside itself, to declamation or to song. This also imposes upon it a certain rigidity which arrests any development from it, such as there was in Elizabethan dramatic verse from its earlier rhetorical ' simplicity ' to its later close-down-to-speech complexity. But what in the ballads is lost in simplification is gained in effectiveness of presentation:

> ' What news, what news '? said young Hind Horn:
> ' No news, no news,' said the old beggar man.
> ' No news,' said the beggar, ' No news at a',
> But there is a wedding in the king's ha'.

What the repetition does is to increase the expectancy. This is resolved into a surprise. ' A conversation ' seems to be reproduced in what seems a hard, unyielding medium, but with (as also and more especially in *Lamkin*) quite astonishingly effective results. The ballad dialogue is both itself stylized and an integral part of the stylization. ' All imaginative art,' writes Mr. Yeats (in his remarkable essay *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*) ' remains at a distance and this distance once chosen must be firmly held against a pushing world . . . The arts which interest me, while seeming to separate from the world and us a group of figures, images, symbols, enable us to pass for a few moments into a deep of the mind that had hitherto been too subtle for our habitation ' . . . seem, in fact, ' to recede from us into some more powerful life.' The ballads are more than the beginnings of such an art.

When the eighteenth century found the ballads artistically ' rude ' and ' unpolished ' it may have been simply that the variations are for the most part very fragmentary, so that anything like a completely formed poem in the literary sense is rare. The ballads are sets of variations, fragmentary indeed, but in the extremely conventionalized medium I have spoken of. It is in this

[1]But the importance of the refrain to the ballads as we have them has been over-emphasized, I think.

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sense they are ' impersonal ' apart altogether from their anonymity as to authorship.

Not that this medium itself remains constant. Even the Scottish Ballads, considered as a group by themselves, break up into lesser groups as soon as one looks at them closely enough. *Hughie the Graeme, Dick o' the Cow, Jamie Telfer, Jock o' the Side, Kinmont Willie,* for example, form a group possessing robust characteristics of its own considerably apart from what I have taken to be the central group. But these lesser groups retain a vital relation with each other and with the whole, which evidences a homogeneous community, in vital contact also with its neighbours but not dependent on imported stuff.

The mere existence of this ballad poetry among the largely unlettered Scottish ' people ' in the eighteenth century is evidence also of the existence than of a popular taste that there is no equivalent of now among the lettered ' people ' either in Scotland or in England.[1] The contemporary popular taste as represented by the contemporary popular entertainment (popular fiction, popular films, jazz music) is of a very much lower order. There is now such a gap between it and the literary tradition that it is difficult to know how long the literary tradition itself, deprived of sustenance from beneath, can persist.

But more particular evidence of the quality of popular taste a generation or two ago is provided by a comparison between the variations of any one ballad (such as was recently made by Professor Gerould). Between the eight variations of the two opening lines of the *Unquiet Grave* (which Professor Gerould sets down) there is indeed very little to choose. This is the case also with an astonishingly large proportion of the ballad variations. Whether they were always the result of forgetfulness or not (it is very doubtful) they exhibit an astonishingly high degree of artistic competence to have been so widespread. Whoever was responsible for them could substitute lines as good for the lines which were either forgotten or not. They exhibit in practice a popular taste acquired, quite unconsciously, through long familiarity with ballads,

[1]Mr. Robert Graves is interested in the ' ballads ' that came into existence among the British troops during the war, but these are the merest drivel as he would agree.

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My reason for doubting whether the variations arose simply from the necessity for filling up gaps in memory, rather than from some deeper necessity, may become clear from a comparison between two passages from two variations of the *Cruel Mother*:

Child B. As she was going to the church,
She saw a sweet babe in the porch.

O sweet babe, and thou were mine,
I wad cleed thee in the silk so fine.

O mother dear when I was thine,
You did na prove to me sae kind.

Child C. She has howked a hole baith deep and wide,
She has put them in baith side by side.

She has covered them oer wi a marble stane
Thinking she would gang maiden hame.

As she was walking by her father's castle wa,
She saw twa pretty babes playing at the ba.

O bonnie babes, gin ye were mine,
I would dress you up in satin fine.

O cruel mother, we were thine . . .

These variations are in fact two independent poems. There is here a difference of vision.

This suggests also the nature of what, I think, one learns to look for in the Scottish Ballads. When the fragments belonging to the group are set together (not that one supposes they were ever anything else than fragmentary) portions of the outlines of a pattern within that of the conventionalized medium become discernible. What these form the very fragmentary revelation of is a folk mythology. It is, I wish tentatively to suggest, the central thing in the Scottish Ballads, from which a complete understanding of them must proceed. It is here:

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She's gane into the Jew's garden
Where the grass grew lang and green:
She powd an apple red and white
To wyle the young thing in.[1]

It is also here:

I'll show you where the white lilies grow
On the banks of Italie.

And later in the same poem:[2]

' O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on? '
' O yon are the hills of heaven ' he said
' Where you will never win.'

' O whaten a mountain is yon,' she said
' All so dreary wi frost and snow? '
' O yon is the mountain of hell ' he said
' Where you and I will go.'

and it is, wizened, here:

She's turned me into an ugly worm
And gard me toddle about the tree.[3]

It is a symbolism which is unmistakable wherever it occurs—the green garden, the apple, the braid, braid road across the lily leven (*Thomas the Rhymer*) or down by yon sunny fell (*Queen of Elfian's Nourice*) the rose broken from the tree (*Tam Lin*) the nut broken from the tree (*Hind Etin*) the place ' at the foot of our Lord's knee ' ' set about wi gilly-flowers ' where women go who die in child-birth (*Sweet William's Ghost*). I find what corresponds with it in Bunyan whose work is the expression of a folk-mythology which is not merely derivative from the Authorised Version. But I seem to find the same quality of vision, individualized, in Blake.

It is at this point that it becomes necessary to stress the fundamental difference between the Scottish Ballads and the

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[1]*Hugh of Lincoln.*
[2]*The Demon Lover.* (*The Carpenter's Wife*).
[3]*Alison Gross.*

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Romantic Poetry of the nineteenth century (with which work Blake is also, I think, wrongly associated). That poetry took over for its own purposes a quantity of what may be described as the ' external machinery ' of the ballads. Its Poetic Diction is derived, through Coleridge and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, almost as much from that of the ballads (chiefly because of their apparent ' picturesque ' mediævalism) as from Spenser and Milton. But this Poetic Diction is cut off from the vigour—

She stickit him like a swine

—of the popular speech which the Poetic Diction of the ballads is to a considerable extent a stylization of. . Correspondingly there is nothing in common between the vital, if very fragmentary, vision of the Scottish Ballads, and the insubstantial dream of nineteenth century poetry.

The ballad art, like other art, seems ' to separate from the world and us a group of figures, images, symbols ' and thereby ' enables us to pass . . . into a deep of the mind.' It is difficult to resist the conclusion that nineteenth century ' appreciation ' subtly externalized (and sentimentalized) the significance of these ' figures, images, symbols,' even those which most appealed to it:

And he saw neither sun nor moon
But he heard the roaring of the sea.[1]

has a ' definite ' significance in its context.

' Get dancers here to dance ' she said.
' And minstrels for to play
For here's my young son, Florentine,
Come here wi me to stay . . . '

For naething coud the companie do,
Nor naething coud they say
But they saw a flock o' pretty birds
That took their bride away.[2]

There is more than a nursery-tale significance in, for example, the birds—that is to say, in Cow-me-doo as well as in the Twa Cor-

[1] *Thomas the Rhymer.* [2] *Earl of Mar's Daughter.*

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bies ; rather, there is the significance there often is, latent, in a nursery-tale which has been a folk-tale.

If the symbolism of which I have spoken is kept in mind the other images too, assume, in varying degrees, a symbolical value in relation to it. The images of finery, for example, particularly of dress, which are so frequent in the Scottish Ballads, are then recognized to possess a symbolical value as profound as in Bunyan (' . . . he that is clad in Silk and Velvet '). That finery is associated with folly, pride and death. It is Vanity.

Fair Margaret was a rich ladye
The king's cousin was she ;
Fair Margaret was a rich ladye
As vain as vain could be.

She ward her wealth on the gay cleedin
That comes frae yont the sea,
She spent her time frae morning till night
Adorning her fair bodye.

Ae night she sate in her stately ha
Kaimin her yellow hair . . .[1]

This religious sense is behind the peculiar satiric element (a fierce exultant derison almost) in the lines:

O our Scots Nobles were richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone:
Bot lang owre a the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or ere they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cam sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for their ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.[2]

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[1] *Proud Lady Margaret.* [2] Version from Percy's *Reliques.*

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and this religious sense is present also, pityingly and wonderingly, in

> But she put on the glistering gold
> To shine through Edinburgh town

in its *Marie Hamilton* context—a poem which seems to me charged with this religious sense.

The ballads are concerned, it is true, almost entirely with the circle of the life of the body, with birth, instinctive action, death and the decay of the body. Again, they present on the one hand (as W. P. Ker and others noted) images of a princely grandeur erected out of earth, and on the other hand, its counterpart, the earthiness of death and decay. These images are contrasted and associated, if not explicitly, by their mutual presence. The total effect is thus sombre. It has been customary to speak of the ' paganism ' of the Scottish Ballads. I suppose I mean the same thing but I should prefer to describe them (keeping in mind the symbolism I have spoken of) as, in a profound sense, ' religious.'[1] They embody, in any case, very fragmentarily indeed, but with startling immediacy, a vision of human life which sprang apparently from the imagination of ' the folk.'

JOHN SPEIRS.

[1]The beautiful English specifically religious folk-poems (*St. Stephen and King Herod, The Cherry-Tree Carol*, for example) require to be appreciated separately and along with the Miracle Plays.

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GEORGE CHAPMAN[1]

II.

BUSSY d'Ambois is a difficult play, and I hardly know where to begin to write about it. The difficulty is not, as might first appear, that it contains a number of heterogeneous parts ; for on a second or third reading some at least of these—for example, the panegyric on the Queen, the interlude of Maffé, and (I think) the conjuring, the devil and the ghost—qualify themselves as intrusions, receive less and less attention, and are finally ignored. The difficulty is rather that the play has a unity which seems to preclude all division into parts. The characters remain within the plot and do not issue from it ; the plot remains within what may be called the thought of the play ; and this thought, if abstracted from the plot and the characters, retains nothing specifically dramatic. The best I can do is, I think, to consider in succession the principal scenes.

The two I shall take first are scenes of temptation, in which there is displayed the opposition between policy and virtue as principles of human conduct. According to the first the only goods for man are material goods, the satisfaction of the senses, and wealth and power as a means to these ; and these goods are the only ones to be pursued. Virtue demands the pursuit of goods which do not fall within material nature. Monsieur is a believer in policy and wishes to win Bussy as his bravo, Tamyra as his mistress.

In a few lines he expounds the position at Court:

> There's but a thread 'twixt me and a crown,
> I would not wish it cut unless by nature ;
> Yet to prepare me for that possible fortune
> 'Tis good to get resolved spirits about me,

and therefore

> I followed d'Ambois to this green retreat,
> A man of spirit beyond reach of fear.

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[1]The first part of this essay appeared in *Scrutiny*, March, 1935.

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At the moment d'Ambois is practising the philosophic virtues of poverty and humility ; they have been forced upon him by necessity but, he declares in soliloquy, they are welcome:

> Fortune, not reason, rules the state of things,
> Reward goes backward, honour on his head ;
> Who is not poor, is monstrous ; only need
> Gives form and worth to every human seed.

The soliloquy is neither well-ordered nor cogent ; and as the play advances it becomes more and more obvious that Bussy is not possessed of a clear head. Monsieur has no doubt that he can easily be led from virtue:

> . . . he is young and haughty, apt to take
> Fire at advancement, to bear state and flourish.

But Monsieur has, as a special reason for confidence, his politic creed, according to which

> None loathes the world so much, nor loves to scoff it,
> But gold and grace will make him surfeit of it.

To a convinced holder of this creed, attachment to virtue proceeds only from two causes: either from the blindness of folly, or from an affectation to despise the goods it has been found impossible to obtain. Acting upon the first hypothesis, Monsieur delivers what appears to be an exhortation to virtue ; but, he suggests, the proper dwelling of virtue is not obscurity, but the light:

> . . . . as the light
> Not only serves to show, but renders us
> Mutually profitable, so our lives
> In acts exemplary not only win
> Ourselves good names, but do to others give
> Matter for virtuous deeds.

Bussy is unimpressed: what exactly does Monsieur want? 'Come to Court,' is the reply. Bussy's answer is a catalogue of the occupations of those in high places:

> . . . what should I do?
> Flatter great lords, to put them still in mind

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> Why they were made lords ; or please humorous ladies
> With a good carriage, tell them idle tales
> To make their physic work . . .

and so on. The catalogue is worthy of a politician. Hearing it, Monsieur is relieved, for the man is obviously not a fool. Not folly then, but affectation is to be conquered ; and that can be done with the gift of gold. Monsieur leaves off his exhortation:

> . . . thou need'st not learn,
> Thou hast the theory,

hardly deigns to make the offer of gold, stating merely that he will send it ; and confident of success leaves the stage without waiting for an answer.

The scene is typical of the play in that to a large extent it is composed of statements in universal form. Monsieur confesses his private aim, and Bussy's need is obvious (he is dressed in rags): but these furnish rather the occasion than the matter for the dialogue. The appeal is to reason, rather than to Bussy's particular need. The temptation on Tamyra is much of the same kind. As Monsieur is inviting to adultery, this time he begins with the language of policy:

> Pray thee regard thine own good, if not mine,
> And cheer my love for that: you do not know
> What you may be by me.

Tamyra replies as might any virtuous wife:

> You shall not pull me down. My husband's height
> Is crown to all my hopes, and his retiring
> To any mean state, shall be my aspiring.

This sort of language Monsieur can tolerate only for his own purposes: therefore, as Bussy had called his bluff, he proceeds to call Tamyra's. What is the behaviour of wives at Court?

> Still you stand on your husband ; so do all
> The common sex of you, when y'are encountered
> With one ye cannot fancy: all men know
> You live in Court here, by your own election,
> Frequenting all our common sports and triumphs,

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> All the most youthful company of men:
> And wherefore do you so? To please your husband?
> 'Tis gross and fulsome.

If Tamyra will only confess to affectation, it will be possible, Monsieur thinks, to negotiate with her on equal terms, as with a politician. Wearied at length by his importunity, Tamyra hints that in her behaviour to men she is not wholly governed by virtue:

> . . . Then I pray be answered:
> For in good faith my lord I do not like you
> In that sort you like.

This is not very encouraging, but it is enough for Monsieur. He immediately reopens the negotiation:

> . . . Then have at you here!
> Take with a politic hand this rope of pearl,
> And though you be not amorous, yet be wise:
> Take me for wisdom.

In spite of the material out of which they are built, the two scenes make, I think, their contribution to the characters. The general statements shed light on the actions, showing how and why they take place. The light, if not abundant, is adequate; and mere adequacy may be preferable to abundance. As it excludes irrelevancies, it shields the reader from fantasy and conjecture; and, to take an example, Monsieur's actions—his abandonment of any persuasion to vice, when he realizes that vice is not unrecognized as such by Bussy; and his unabashed offer of the pearls—may perhaps, as illustrated by his protestations for and against virtue, have a stricter claim than can usually be urged to the adjective 'inevitable.'

In the event it becomes clear that Monsieur never fails accurately to diagnose other persons' weaknesses; it is his most striking quality. But when the temptation scenes are considered it appears that he is wrong twice. If Bussy accepts his gold, it is not as a bribe, but as the reward due to virtue. Fortune, decides Bussy, is not after all incompatible with virtue; if she brings a reward, even at the hands of Monsieur, it may be accepted. But acceptance will not establish any debt of gratitude. Nor will Bussy help Monsieur to rise at Court by policy:

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I am for honest actions, not for great.
If I may bring up a new fashion,
And rise at Court for virtue, speed his plough!

Tamyra's rebuff is less equivocal. The offer of the pearls rouses her indignation:

. . . By this light my lord
Y'are a vile fellow,

and she returns to the language of virtue, the dropping of which had warmed Monsieur's hopes. She does more: summoning her maid she adopts the language, perhaps the cant, of puritanism:

Come on dame, you who are at your book
When men are at your mistress. Have I taught you
Such waiting-woman's quality?

Monsieur has a taunt ready to his lips, but can only retire, discomforted.

With their exposition, policy and virtue might seem to have discharged their dramatic functions. Though their supporters may hurt, destroy or convert among themselves, the two principles cannot as such affect each other, either to destruction or conversion. Therefore Chapman, who intends more than a play purely or even mainly of human intrigue, at this point introduces a third principle—though to call it a 'principle,' as will appear later, is not very happy. It is nature; which, as the material in which both virtue and policy must work, serves to some extent as their mediator—puts them, so to speak, into communication, brings them at least partly into each other's danger. And as the goods which policy pursues are to be found in nature, it appears at first as policy's ally; or at least, as the adversary of virtue.

It forces upon the supporters of virtue the goods for which they have no esteem. Tamyra, for example, is impelled to adultery: she desires Bussy madly, and summons him to a clandestine meeting for which he has made no request. And yet, says Tamyra,

It is not I, but urgent destiny . . .
What shall weak dames do, when th' whole work of nature
Hath a strong finger in each one of us?

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> Needs must that sweep away the silly cobweb
> Of our still undone labours . . .
> We cannot keep a constant course in virtue . . .
> Our bodies are but thick clouds to our souls,
> Through which they cannot shine as they desire:
> When all the stars and even the sun himself
> Must stay the vapours' times that he exhales
> Before he can make good his beams to us:
> O how can we, that are but motes to him,
> Wandering at random in his ordered rays,
> Disperse our passions' fumes with our weak labours,
> That are more thick and black than all earth's vapours?

The speech is to be taken quite literally: Tamyra is helpless. As she speaks of love, Bussy speaks of the passion of grief: it is

> . . . a natural sickness of the blood
> That time to part asks, as his coming had.
> Only slight fools, grieved, suddenly are glad;
> A man might say to a dead man, Be revived,
> As well as to one sorrowful, Be not grieved.

As the sentiment is not a Christian one, it is perhaps not without significance that Chapman should repeat it in the mouth of his Friar, who agrees that 'humours must be fed,' and that

> . . . our affections' storm
> Raised in our blood, no reason can reform.

Chapman's purpose is not to bring ridicule upon the Friar; but rather, by the unlikelihood of the mouth which utters it, to recommend the sentiment.

For it is of the greatest importance to the action. Were there the slightest hope of Tamyra conquering her vice, or of her example preserving others from the like, it might be expected of her to confess it. But, in the matter of vice, both she and the whole of humankind are at the mercy of nature. Lest the supporters of virtue receive too much discouragement; lest the supporters of policy see in her confession little less than the statement of their doctrine: her duty is rather to conceal, than to confess. She is like a person afflicted with a loathsome and incurable disease, to deplore which is useless, to discuss which melancholy; the only

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thing, to preserve as long as possible such life as it is possible to preserve, is to hide the disease—if there is strength of mind enough to do so.

Tamyra shows no lack of strength. She engages upon a diligent and conscientious hypocrisy. Her declarations of virtue to Monsieur were made after her invitation to Bussy. When Monsieur has gone, and Bussy's arrival is imminent, she plays to her husband the part of an affectionate wife:

> . . . my soul
> Is so long without me, and I dead,
> As you are absent.

She plays the part all the better because she recognizes it as a part:

> Our loves like sparkles are, that brightest shine
> When they go out ; most vice shows most divine.

To her maid she remains the censorious mistress:

> Go maid to bed ; lend me your book I pray,
> Not like yourself for form.

Tamyra, it has been objected, shows too much strength: she is not sufficiently feminine, as a character she does not live. The adjective ' living ' is a dangerous intruder into dramatic criticism—*the more dangerous, because the more ready.* Any comparison between Tamyra and a human being is bound to mislead, if that human being is not as she is consciously at grips with a force as sovereign and as loathsome as Chapman's nature. There could be no play if Tamyra were not exceptionally strong. And, as a matter of fact, she is not wholly without signs of weakness: she awaits Bussy's arrival, for example, not only with ardour but in fear. With her partner in vice she will be compelled to drop the mask of virtue ; the horror of vice rises up in her ; and therefore—

> . . . Fear, fear and hope
> Of one thing at one instant fight in me:
> I love what most I loathe, and cannot live
> Unless I compass that which holds my death.
> For life's mere death, loving him that loathes me,
> And he I love will loathe me, when he sees

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I fly my sex, my virtue, my renown
To rune so madly on a man unknown . . .
How shall I look on him? How shall I live
And not consume in blushes?

Fortunately the conflict is not left for illustration to a character alone. It is displayed in the central situation of the play ; which must, I think, be without parallel in tragedy. Tamyra has confided her lust to the Friar, and charged him to guide Bussy to and from her apartment. In his turn the Friar has confided in Bussy, adjuring him to yield to Tamyra ; to make it appear, however, not that he is yielding to her, but she to him. Bussy has agreed. In the morning, as the lovers await the Friar's return, Tamyra begs: ' Do not tell him of our love.' Bussy replies: ' Alas, he will not think it.' In concert they repeat a trumpery excuse for their all-night converse. The Friar accepts it:

I know your serious disposition well.

Now this is transparent hypocrisy, not only to the audience, but to every person on the stage. In spite of her request to Bussy, Tamyra knows that the Friar knows of her love ; in spite of his reply, Bussy knows this also. And, because of the Friar's confidence, Bussy knows that Tamyra knows the Friar knows ; the only possible doubt is whether Tamyra knows of the Friar's confidence to Bussy. The provocation to suspicion of lust is however so great, and the excuse put forward so trumpery, that she can have little doubt of what has passed between them. *Qui est-ce donc qu'on trompe ici ? Tout le monde est dans le secret.* Exactly. No one hopes to deceive any one else ; at most, to deceive himself or to help in another's self-deception. Such is the shift to which, in the world of *Bussy d'Ambois,* virtue is forced ; to obtain, not any satisfaction, but the empty acknowledgment of its claims. The shift is fantastic, insecure ; the degree of its insecurity gives that to which the catastrophe is inevitable.

Meanwhile, the scope of the catastrophe has been widened. Nature has revealed itself as little in alliance, and as much in opposition, to policy as to virtue. For policy, though it acknowledges only a base end, is nevertheless action to an end ; and nature knows nothing of ends. In it are to be found the goods

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which policy pursues, but it does not produce them for policy—or indeed for itself, or for anything. As it produces without forethought, so it destroys without regret. Policy therefore is as liable as is virtue to be treated by nature. If virtue lays itself open to tragedy by believing itself above nature ; policy does so, by believing that nature itself is politic. Monsieur learns this at the hands of Bussy.

Immediately upon his arrival at Court, Bussy justifies the prognostication that he would ' bear state.' He is ' a courtier rotten before he is ripe ' ; watching his unbounded insolence, Monsieur exclaims in admiration:

> His great heart will not down, 'tis like the sea
> That partly by his own internal heat,
> Partly by the stars' daily and nightly motion,
> Their heat and light, and partly of the place
> The divers frames, but chiefly by the moon,
> Bristled with surges, never will be won
> (No, not when th'hearts of all those powers are burst)
> To make retreat into his settled home,
> Till he be crowned with his own quiet foam.

About Bussy's pride there is the splendour of a natural phenomenon on the grand scale ; but if with his admiration Monsieur mingles any self-congratulation he speaks too soon.

Their divergent views of the money transaction between them would in any case have embroiled Bussy and Monsieur ; so would Bussy's determination to uphold himself at Court, if at all, then by virtue. But the conflict would not necessarily have been to the death: a virtuous opponent works to a principle, and his moves can be predicted ; he can be circumvented, and need not be destroyed. But Bussy has a muddled head, and does not, as does Tamyra, clearly distinguish between virtue and nature. Whereas she had emerged from the temptation by Monsieur only more conscious of her weakness, he emerged more confident in his strength. Whatever he does not hand over to the guidance of policy is, he assumes, itself virtue ; as Monsieur includes nature within policy, he includes virtue within nature. But nature having no principle of action, no end, what Bussy calls virtue is whatever his pride or his fancy shall dictate.

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His insolence involves him in a duel, and he kills three men ; in duty bound Monsieur, at the expense of much sophistry, wins his pardon of the King. But Bussy declares he needs no pardon:

> I loathe as much a deed of unjust death
> As law itself doth.

According to Bussy, that is, the killing of the three men was not unjust. He makes the explicit claim that whatever he does is *ipso facto* virtuous:

> Who to himself is law, no law doth need,
> Offends no law, and is a king indeed.
> Let me be king myself,

he asks of the King ; who, with an enigmatic reservation (' we give but ours ') grants the request. From this point onwards, irony hangs heavily over all Bussy's adventures. When he is congratulated at preserving that ' state and spirit ' which render kingship unnecessary and impossible, it is by the King. When he leaves Tamyra he suggests that sin is but the invention of ' the witch policy ' ; and fresh from this speech and his adultery he sets himself up at Court as the censor of adultery and of all sin. The most obscure shall not escape him:

> Show me a clergyman that is in voice
> A lark of heaven, in heart a mole of earth ;
> That hath a good living and a wicked life ;
> A temperate look and a luxurious gut . . .
> Let me but hawk at him, and like the other
> He shall confess all, and you shall hang him.

Bussy, possessing no consistency, acknowledges no control ; he is, as Monsieur describes him, a ' spirit raised without a circle.'

As such he is dangerous to anybody, but most of all to the man who raised him. Prompted perhaps by an uneasy sense of obligation, Bussy takes, in the absence of all other principle of action, that of opposition to Monsieur. He will ' envy, betray, slander, blaspheme, change each hour a religion, Do anything ' but what Monsieur wishes. When this accusation is brought against him in so many words, he has nothing to reply but vaporous abuse.

He must therefore be removed. Monsieur is at no loss to imagine how this shall be managed:

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> When that most royal beast of chase the hart,
> Being old and cunning in his lairs and haunts,
> Can never be discovered to the bow,
> The piece, or hound, yet where, behind some queach
> He breaks his gall and rutteth with his hind
> The place is marked, and by his venery
> He still is taken.

Who is Bussy's hind? A chance question is put to a waiting-maid—'never dreaming of d'Ambois'—and the intrigue with Tamyra is discovered.

At this point the two streams of the action unite, and the one swells the other. It would be difficult to exaggerate the force of that against Tamyra, for, by the confession of the waiting-maid, it has newly recovered its freedom. By her refusal of the pearls Tamyra had appeared to Monsieur neither foolish and virtuous, nor wise and politic, but wise and virtuous ; the sort of person, that is, whose existence policy refuses to recognize ; against whom therefore it could provide him with no weapons. He might have plotted her destruction ; but that, while satisfying his lust or his revenge, could not have rehabilitated policy. Now it appears that, in taxing Tamyra with lust, Monsieur was right after all ; that if she is wise, she is also politic—for Monsieur can conceive no fantastic virtue ; and that she is a consummate politician, for she overreached him. She is therefore vulnerable to his weapons, and worthy of them. The unexpected discovery brings him a joy so great that he dare not contemplate the prospect of its removal ; he fears it may spring even from his own impatience:

> Would I had never known it! For before
> I shall persuade the importance to Montsurry—

Montsurry is Tamyra's husband—

> And make him with some studied stratagem
> Train d'Ambois to his wreak, his maid may tell it ;
> Or I (out of my fiery thirst to play
> With the fell tiger, up in darkness tied,
> And give it some light) make it break quite loose.
> I fear it afore heaven . . .

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He does in fact yield to the temptation to parade the tiger, and hints to Bussy a little of what he knows. The threat he receives in reply:

> . . . you may have your nose made less and slit,
> Your eyes thrust out,

convinces him of the necessity of prudence ; he falls back on such satisfaction as he can find in teasing Montsurry:

> What, stricken dumb! Nay fie my lord, be not daunted ;
> Your case is common ; were it ne'er so rare,
> Bear it as rarely! Now to laugh were manly.

His own elation makes him entirely insensible to the grief of the poor man, who adores his wife.

I do not intend to detail the catastrophe, nor how, to prevent it, Bussy calls in the supernatural and prepares at last to submit his spirit to control. It is to no purpose: Tamyra is mutilated, her husband runs mad, the Friar dies of horror at what he has helped to bring about, Bussy himself, in the words of Mr. Eliot, expires in the odour of Seneca. There are but three speeches to which I wish to call attention, and then I have done.

The first is by Montsurry. We have seen little of him in the play, but apparently he is a simple soul, unaware of the problems which the universe is presenting to those about him. When Monsieur made advances to his wife he advised her, not of course to accept them, but not to be too peremptory in rejection ; Monsieur, after all, was a prince. Of his wife's assurances of affection he was completely credulous, and he was deeply in love with her:

> . . . my whole heart is wounded
> When any least thought in you is but touched.

He had a similar affection for the Church, and the Friar reports him

> A noble, zealous and obedient son.

Suddenly this man is made to see what the universe has demanded of his wife, and the Friar dies at his feet, the word ' religion ' on his lips, and a pander. He blasts the situation with a single image:

> The too huge bias of the world hath swayed
> Her back-part upwards, and with that she braves

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The hemisphere that long her mouth hath mocked.

It is the judgment of common sense ; the effort of Tamyra and her allies to save the world's face was not worth making.

As the catastrophe approaches, Monsieur sobers at the thought of what he is about to destroy. This is Bussy, with ' so much spirit to dare and so much power to do ' ; Bussy of the duel, upon the description of which Chapman lavishes all the resources of his own style, all that he can borrow from Seneca :

> . . . as I once did see
> In my young travels through Armenia
> An angry unicorn in his full career
> Charge with too swift a foot a jeweller
> That watched him for the treasure of his brow,
> And ere he could get shelter from a tree
> Nail him with his rich antler to the earth :
> So d'Ambois ran upon revenged L'Anou.

Bussy is to perish immediately by Monsieur, but ultimately by the wilfulness of nature. If the world to Montsurry is deformed, to Monsieur it begins to appear shapeless :

> Now shall we see that nature hath no end
> In her great works, responsive to their worths ;
> That she, who makes so many eyes and souls
> To see and foresee, is stark blind herself ;
> And as illiterate men say Latin prayers
> By rote of heart and daily iteration,
> Not knowing what they say, so nature lays
> A deal of stuff together, and by use
> Or by the mere necessity of matter
> Ends such a work, fills it, or leaves it empty
> Of strength or virtue, error or clear truth,
> Not knowing what she does ; but usually
> Gives that which we call merit to a man
> And believe should arrive him on huge riches
> Honour and happiness, that effects his ruin.

The most tragic utterance of all is Tamyra's. Her lover dead before her, her husband irreconcilable, she reflects :

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O had I never married but for form,
Never vowed faith but purposed to deceive,
Never made conscience of any sin,
But cloaked it privately and made it common ;
Nor never honoured been in blood or mind ;
Happy had I been then, as others are
Of the like licence ; I had then been honoured ;
Lived without envy ; custom had benumbed
All sense of scruple and all note of frailty ;
My fate had been untouched, my heart unbroken:
But, shunning all, I strike on all offence,
O husband! Dear friend! O my conscience!

The most valiant partisan of virtue, that is, deserts its cause. It would have been better, she thinks, had she made the simple confession of vice against which she strove ; had she been, as Monsieur has assumed her to be, politic.

Would she be consoled, or only more deeply distressed, to learn by the example of Monsieur that policy as well as virtue is fruitless? But perhaps it is Chapman's intention not to raise the point: he has drawn a world in which action to an end is impossible, and mankind by its essence, when defeated of one end, turns with some vestige of hope to another.

III.

Bussy has, I am afraid, occupied me an unconscionable time ; but it seemed to me—I do not know with what justice—that a number of things needed to be said about it, and that these things were difficult to say. Fortunately *Byron* is simpler.

In it virtue and policy appear as in *Bussy*, but nature is narrowed from that of mankind in general to that of the hero. Byron, formed of a special substance, ' the stuff of fortune, great and generous,' has the instability of fortune, and the gift of perseverance in neither policy nor virtue. But he alone in the play seems aware of the deadly opposition between the two ; as though that which forbade him to persevere, enabled him more subtly to apprehend. And he alone suffers death or hurt: the rest of the characters purchasing their safety by varying degrees of insensibility.

The play is mainly the history, and further the spiritual

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history, of one man ; its shape is therefore dictated by his vagaries. And it extends through ten acts—for I look on the break between *The Conspiracy* and *The Tragedy* as an artificial contrivance. There seems to be no reason, other than the play itself, why it should not have extended through twenty, or been completed in eight.

A history not recommended by its shape claims attention only by its truth, and Chapman is forced back upon a measure of realism. This is not altogether to be deplored ; but it may be doubted to what extent the tenth act (the fifth of *The Tragedy*) is proper to a work of art. Byron is face to face with death, the horrors of which are revealed to him by his quickness of apprehension. To escape from them he 'alters every minute': but his shifts, as they are futile, are harrowing to the reader. It may be good discipline to read them through ; but also, the discipline may have ceased to be aesthetic.

But this defect, in so far as it is a defect, serves only to illuminate more strongly a merit that has often been denied to Chapman. If he could not create a character, he could not harrow by that character's suffering. Nor, it may be reflected, could he hold together a play like *Byron*. It does not seem to have been recognized to what an extent Chapman is interested in his characters, not primarily as physical, but as moral beings ; to what extent therefore the general moral reflections are of importance. The temptation is to consider these as of importance merely for Chapman ; to accept and dismiss them as statements of a Chorus, which can and even should be torn from their contexts. Perhaps it is apparent how improper that would be in *Bussy*. A single example comes to my hand to show how improper it is in *Byron*.

At the beginning of *The Conspiracy* the agents of Spain and of Savoy endeavour to corrupt the hero's loyalty. They do so first by serving him like a king—'we'll make his feet so tender they shall gall in all paths but to empire'—and then by insinuating the maxims of policy. Byron is moved but, for the moment, continues to profess the maxims of virtue. Two acts later an agent, knowing that Byron can overhear, repeats the maxims of virtue as though he believed in them:

> So when the glories of our lives, men's loves,
> Clear consciences, our fames and loyalties

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> That did us worthy comfort, are eclipsed,
> Grief and disgrace invade us.

The trick is a cunning one. If anything could preserve Byron from treason, it would be the thought that he is being schooled into it ; for his vanity is colossal. But now he is presented with the opportunity of appearing, not as pupil, but as schoolmaster ; of presenting as his own sentiments which he has borrowed, but of which he has approved on reflection. He seizes it, and is lost to virtue. He attends to his spiritual offspring with the grotesque satisfaction of the sparrow to the cuckoo. On Chapman's part the scene is a brilliant one ; yet an editor has chosen to remark on it that Byron is expressing sentiments contradictory of those he expressed in Act I. This apparently is an instance of Chapman's neglect of character development.

To the habit of tearing reflections from their context is due the representation of both Bussy and Byron as heroes strong in a Stoic virtue, superior to all worldly happenings except death. But Bussy proclaims his self-sufficiency only to make himself ridiculous ; Byron's lines, fine though they are:

> Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea
> Loves t'have his sails filled with a lusty wind . . .

—there is no need to complete the quotation—are belied by every one of his actions. He has no stability, for he is the prey of every tempter ; no composure, for an old man reduces him to tears ; no dignity—' What's grave in earth, what awful, what abhorred, If my rage be ridiculous?' He dies, not as a witness to any faith, but as a coward and a fool. If a summary of the play is to be sought, it is not in Byron's Stoic reflections, but in the condemnation of Stoicism by Soissons:

> O Virtue, thou art now far worse than fortune ;
> Her gifts stuck by the Duke when thine are vanished,
> Thou brav'st thy friend in need: Necessity,
> That used to keep thy wealth, Contempt, thy love,
> Have both abandoned thee in his extremes.
> Thy powers are shadows, and they comfort dreams.

Necessity is said to have kept the wealth of virtue because of the Stoic habit of attributing to Necessity anything which, if attributed

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to another cause, would disturb a virtuous composure ; it can, so to speak, be drawn on by virtue ; and the contempt of all things but this composure kept alive in the Stoic the love of virtue (the implied genitive in ' thy love ' is objective). When he most should do so, Byron is incapable of reflecting on Necessity ; so far from contemning anything, he becomes himself most contemptible.

In *The Revenge of Bussy* the hero maintains a Stoic demeanour to the last. But, as I said in the first part of this paper, he thereby disqualifies himself from being a hero in any proper sense ; and *Bussy* and *Byron* should not be interpreted so as to make them similar plays to *The Revenge*—rather, *The Revenge* should be rejected as a play. For it merely repeats, as do the poems, the commonplaces of Stoicism, and they do not, by any conflict with the world, generate an action. To some extent *The Revenge* is a cento of the poems.

IV.

Partly perhaps because of his fondness for simile and apologue Chapman, having decided that his characters are primarily moral beings, confines them as much as possible to the moral world. He tells us nothing, for example, of the physical appearance of Tamyra ; he does not distinguish the characters by their speech. Whether he gains or loses more by doing so will perhaps always be a matter for dispute ; but as they occur so rarely in English drama it is excusable to dwell on the gains. In my remarks on *Bussy* I made use more than once of the adjective ' inevitable ' ; I do not think I was wrong to do so, although there are few English plays to which I should care to apply it. As I use it, it depends upon clarity, and clarity is defeated by too great a number of elements. To be significant and yet few, elements employed in character-drawing need to be moral, not physical. What about variety, what about life? it will be asked. But these depend—in so far as diction alone is not being considered—not upon multitude, but upon the propriety of the actions issuing from the moral qualities, and upon their succession. In French drama there is an example of inevitability, clarity, economy that is fully alive. In some ways it is useful to consider Chapman side by side rather than with Shakespeare, with Racine.

JAMES SMITH.

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CORRESPONDENCE

February 16th, 1935.

Dear Sirs,

Allow me to comment on three statements in Mr. J. L. Russell's article ' The Religion of Progress,' in *Scrutiny* of December, 1934.

1. ' Nothing at all is known at present concerning the cause of biologically progressive mutations ; hence there is no evidence to show that they have arisen naturally.' Mr. Russell on the preceding page takes some care not to define ' biologically progressive mutation,' so it is impossible to rebut his statement completely. But it is worth noting that mutations which lead to an increased viability of animals as shown by longer life and lessened larval mortality have been produced artificially, and have therefore probably occurred in nature under conditions similar to those under which they occurred in the laboratory. I think that this particular ground of appeal for supernatural interference is likely to become considerably less plausible when the work of Timofeéff-Ressowski is more widely known. The origin of life is a much safer card to play. I do not think that it will be trumped by experiment during my lifetime.

2. ' There is no evidence to show that intellectual or artistic genius, or hatred, or fear of death are caused by inheritable factors which could be controlled by artificial selection . . . ' I regard the pedigrees of the Bach, Bernoulli and Darwin families as evidence on the question of genius. Mr. Russell may consider such evidence inconclusive. But he does not help his case by saying that it does not exist. So I must plead that I possess a defence against Mr. Russell's charge of calculated irresponsibility.

3. I am cited as an example of ' the profound and pessimistic contempt with which many intellectuals regard ordinary men and women ' because I suggested that mankind, if it did not evolve further, was a ' rather sorry climax of evolution.' If Mr. Russell does not believe that not only ordinary people, but intellectuals, might be a good deal better than they are, he is a rather extreme optimist. But let him turn his thunderbolts on Jeremiah who

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said that ' the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,' and Cranmer, who asked God to ' have mercy upon us miserable sinners,' to mention no greater names, before he attacks me.

Finally let me quarrel with his title. Progress as ordinarily understood has nothing to do with evolution. Mankind has progressed a good deal in the last ten thousand years (or so I think). I know of no evidence that it has evolved progressively during that period. The progress has been due to an improvement in tradition (to use that word in its broadest sense) rather than innate endowment. One may therefore believe in the possibility of social progress, *i.e.* improvement in the environment into which man is born ; in evolutionary progress, *i.e.* improvement in the faculties with which he is born ; or in both, or in neither.

I happen to believe in both, though I think that social progress is at the present moment the more important. But why call my belief in the possibility and desirability of purposeful evolutionary progress a religion? This belief is compatible with theism (in Dean Inge or Prof. Macdougall) or atheism (in Mr. Wells). It neither postulates nor rejects a belief in supernatural intervention. It merely calls for human effort, in other words it does not rely wholly on supernatural powers. Nor does poetry or plumbing. And it need not involve an advocacy of compulsory sterilization, or even of birth control. If Mr. Russell were not himself an adherent of religion, I should suspect him of employing that word as an opprobious term for use against his opponents.

Yours very truly,

J. B. S. HALDANE.

University of London, University College,
Department of Zoology.

Mr. Russell replies :

1. I do not consider that increased viability is a criterion of biological progress, in the sense in which I was using the term. For instance, many fungus and bacteria spores are much more viable than human beings under most conditions, but they are

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not considered to be high forms of life on this account. I should define biological progress as consisting fundamentally in an increase either in the innate capacity of an organism for purposive (or apparently purposive) action, or in the range and fineness of its actual or potential experiences (*e.g.* increased development of sense perception, memory, reasoning powers, etc.). Progress in this sense appears to be integrally bound up with increasing complexity of brain, sense-organs, nervous system, etc., and this type of organic development is probably the best physical criterion. It cannot, I think, be disputed that no progressive mutation in the sense indicated above, has yet been scientifically explained or artificially produced, or even observed in the laboratory.

2. The examples given by Professor Haldane in his second comment are evidence that genius is probably not distributed fortuitously among the population, but they provide no basis for distinguishing the effects of heredity on the one hand, and family tradition, education, and environment generally, on the other. Specific evidence for heredity as a causative factor could only be obtained by showing that the distribution of genius was determined by definite calculable laws of inheritance. This cannot be done at present. I might add that my accusation of irresponsibility was based on a number of different counts, and that there would have been ample justification for it even if Professor Haldane were given the benefit of the doubt with respect to the inheritance of genius.

3. I certainly admit the possibility, and indeed the desperate urgency, of improving our social tradition. I should consider anyone who was satisfied with the world as it is to-day as being deficient either in intelligence or in moral sensibility. But I believe that genuine progress is only possible if we are prepared to respect the natural rights of every human being as such, irrespective of whether he is desperately wicked, mentally deficient, or anything else. Any abandonment of this principle, besides being wrong in itself, would inevitably lead ultimately to slavery and oppression. I was using the term ' contempt ' as the antithesis not of facile optimism but of respect. Professor Haldane is of course the best judge of whether his attitude to the less distinguished members of the community is one of respect or contempt, according to the above definition, and it is possible that I have misjudged him on this

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point. There can be no doubt, however, as to the attitude of the more extreme advocates of ' biological progress ' on this point.

Professor Haldane's letter reveals two further misconceptions as to the purpose of my article. I did not ' appeal ' for supernatural interference in Evolution, nor did I deny the possibility of further evolutionary progress in Man. I merely pointed out that the scientific evidence in each case was quite inadequate to justify any positive conclusions one way or the other, and also (*pace* Dean Inge!) that the proposed methods of furthering human evolution were incompatible with Christianity and with our accepted standards of justice and morality. Any method which was free from objection on these grounds could be cordially welcomed, and I willingly admit that such methods may eventually be discovered.

Lastly I described the belief in biological progress as a religion because its chief protagonists (H. G. Wells and Julian Huxley) explicitly maintain that it can be and should be invested with a religious significance. I have no wish to insist on the term where Professor Haldane is concerned.

J. L. RUSSELL.

Sirs,

Everybody must feel unwilling to enter the feverish atmosphere of Dr. Leavis's quarrels, but someone ought to state the case against his review of Dr. Richards' *Coleridge on Imagination*. We are told that the book does ' bluntly, nothing ' towards the detailed linguistic analysis of poetry, and an answer must attempt a summary of the book.

There is a strictly literary point, supported by examples (nowhere referred to by Dr. Leavis) ; that the nature poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth depends on an interplay between, or a uniting of, two opposed views of Nature. Philosophy comes in because this process was partly cause of, partly caused by, the philosophical ideas Coleridge developed when he first revolted against Hartley ; it is no use for the literary critic to ignore the connection. The process was also discussed by Coleridge in terms of psychology, and his ideas here, the book claims, are still valuable apart from his poetry. Many of the psychological ideas he

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developed and based his work upon after his revolt against the Hartleian dynasty of psychologists have now come to be accepted by that same dynasty ; we are given examples. One of these is the Fancy-Imagination distinction, and there is a long defence of it ; when Dr. Leavis complains of the triviality of the examples and the evasiveness of the results he does not know that these are Coleridge's results and Coleridge's examples, which Dr. Richards is only trying to defend against the intervening attacks.

This seems enough to keep a small book from doing ' bluntly, nothing.' It may be true that the author fails in ' supporting, when they appear, some serious critical journals ' (p. 392) and he may even be ' lighthearted,' but these personal faults need not make his book quite empty. I should agree with Dr. Leavis so far as he says that Dr. Richards is too content to start hares and had better have worked out his material more fully ; this does not account for so many pages of anathema. In saying that the ' poetic function ' is of great importance to society Dr. Richards is obviously not denying that the society must be such as can support it and be affected by it ; he is merely talking about something else ; and granted this point his ' preposterously extravagant ' hope (p. 391) for a quasi-political salvation from literature is just that of Dr. Leavis. The review is dimly aware of this, and then says it can't be true, or the man would fluff up his feathers and perpetually scream at the Book Society.

One or two minor points. Dr. Richards is shown to be always insensitive as a prose writer because he calls the Old Coleridge the Highgate Spellbinder, not realizing that this implies something disagreeable (Too comic to answer, but try Carlyle on the Old Coleridge). The slight on Mr. Eliot seems imaginary ; his work is referred to by implication in the context as ' the best criticism of to-day ' and for that reason called in evidence. The motorbus (p. 390) is obviously not Science, whose intellectual constructs are not its brute facts. I am not even sure that Dr. Richards disagrees with Dr. Leavis about the Immortality Ode (p. 399), and he was not ' summing it up ' but answering an attack by Coleridge on some of its lines ; the suggestion that he is proved to have no taste in poetry by his failure to say that he agrees with Dr. Leavis is ridiculous. On Dr. Leavis's logical point it seems sufficient to read (p. 386) ' result in a Nature (iv) through which our power of

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control over part of Nature (i) is increasing by embarrassing leaps and bounds.' And there is a curious paragraph on page 385. Dr. Richards is first blamed for introducing his pupils to things they probably did not know about before, such as the term 'nominalism.' Immediately after, as a destruction of his pretensions, 'one is left also with the impression of having been reminded of a number of commonplace philosophic considerations from which strict thinking might start.' This seems no bad ambition for a teacher.

Yours sincerely,

W. EMPSON.

[No comment on the above seems necessary. Mr. Empson is referred back to his texts.—F.R.L.].

LITERARY 'RESEARCH'

Academic specialization has already had some attention in these pages and, since the problems raised are part of a major problem—the function of a university at present—it will receive more.[1] Meanwhile, without endorsing all its positive implications, we are glad to publish this account of the trend of literary 'research studies' by a senior lecturer at a modern university.

THE EDITORS.

It is an open secret in most colleges that behind whatever problems are raised by the training or guidance of graduates looms the ghost of an understaffed department. Proper supervision, for instance, would require a larger personnel than most departments possess to liberate the Head for this work or to provide for a director to take charge of post-graduate studies. The result is that most young graduates who embark upon those special or specialized studies which are generally grouped under the term 'Research' do so with insufficient preparation and with an outlook too narrow and too immature for an immediately successful prosecution of their new tasks. The courses leading up to and

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including Honours in a subject are rarely, if ever, adequate to giving a student who has completed them sufficient background and a sufficiently broad grasp of his subject to enable him to proceed without hindrance or embarrassment. Moreover a training which has been mainly a drill in assimilation can hardly be considered a satisfactory qualification for the kind of operations he will have to perform if he wishes to prosecute original research.

Without realizing, perhaps, the deficiencies of his undergraduate equipment, the prospective 'researcher' settles down to a piece of work which as a rule circumscribes him within a narrow field or exiles him to a remote corner of a wide field. The choice made, his fate is for the time fixed. The energy with which he concentrates upon his task may in the end betray him. Not infrequently the most commendable application produces a narrow crank from whom it is hopeless to expect an imaginative presentation of a subject in its broad generality or in its illuminating detail, because the imagination that generalizes and illuminates is not there. Nothing may be there before long but a fanatic's proficiency in an unrelated technique. This man may be good at phonetics, just as another is good at carburetters. 'The parallel is exact,' said Newman eighty years ago. 'As the body may be sacrificed to some manual or other toil, whether moderate or oppressive, so may the intellect be devoted to some specific profession, and I do not call *this* culture of the intellect.'

It is an honourable thing, of course, that a man should be good at his profession, and a modest thing that he should not claim that his profession qualifies him to discourse on the universe. But there is a way of reducing an Arts subject to a narrow science with results which are disastrous for the general culture of the person who concentrates solely upon his technique, and with consequences which can be more unfortunate still for those whom he may be appointed to instruct.

As against the tendency to introduce the novice into a technical field immediately upon completion of Honours, I submit the follow-

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[1]Different angles on specialization have been given in 'Why Universities?' (Sept., 1934) and 'Shakespeare and Shakespeareans' (Dec., 1934). 'The Modern Universities' will appear in an early number.

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ing consideration. All research worthy of the name should entail diverse and circumstantial reading. Often much of this will lead off the main lines of a subject into byways and dead ends to be pursued perhaps with meagre or negative results. Files of newspapers may, for instance, have to be searched minutely with the doubtful satisfaction that when they have provided nothing, so much waste paper has been cleared out of the investigator's path. Time expended in this way may not be lost for the mature researcher. But in the case of a young person whose object is a post-graduate degree, one is tempted to ask whether he could not be better employed than he often is, by being set a task which would extend his knowledge of the history or the scholarship of a subject; or one which, while it initiates him to methods of specialization, might also improve his judgment and taste by facilitating contact with some of the many masterpieces which his previous studies have had to ignore.

As it is, the method of research most commonly imposed on the contemporary aspirant in Arts threatens to produce a crisis in literary studies. To its dangers, happily enough, an increasing number of observers are becoming sensitive. A wave of superstition seems to have passed through the minds of directors of post-graduate studies during the last twenty or thirty years as to the infinite practicability of the study of literary influences. One of the most subtle and delicate lines of investigation possible to a mature scholar has been proposed to novices who often appear to think, or are persuaded to believe, that the effect of one mind or work on another is as easy to detect as the result of dropping a little alkaline or acid on a film of coloured paper. Sooner or later the realization that a suggestion of influence may not be capable of such direct proof embarrasses the naïve investigator, who has probably been advised that he should aim at producing *facts*. In anxious quest of something concrete he may be tempted to fall back on facts of a kind which are not valid as proofs, facts, for instance, which are inessential or of secondary importance, 'facts' which may even be mere echoes of opinion or references to authorities more or less authentic, whose suggestions or asides are indued with a finality which their authors never meant them to bear.

An instance of misdirected energies may be given as an ex-

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ample. Wishing to improve my acquaintance with the facts of Edgar Allen Poe's influence on modern French literature, I recently turned to a work on the subject which was published in New York in 1927.[1] One should have sufficient sympathy both with supervisors who have to find new subjects for their charges and with young researchers who have more or less willingly to accept what is offered, to avoid indulging in excessive severities at the expense of what was no doubt intended to be the conscientious record of a thorough investigation. The work I consulted promised to be the most comprehensive on this much discussed and far-reaching influence. In a volume of well over three hundred pages much detail had been gathered, set in order and supported with minute annotations. But, apart from all question of literary merit, even as a piece of ' scientific research ' the result was disconcerting.

The diligent investigator showed little power to discriminate between authorities. On p. 88 he could write: ' C. H. Page places Poe among the " foreign masters of the Symbolists." ' To give this reference a semblance of weight he added a footnote: ' C. H. Page is quoted as an authority in Morris's thesis (p. 134), he calls him a " professeur distingué," ' . . . The conclusion of the work makes pathetic reading, unless we catch its spirit. Pressed, no doubt, by the young researcher's anxiety to have something definite to show his examiners, the author breaks into a kind of litany or incantation of names which he seems to regard as magical, invoking them in sounding appeals as if to convince himself and the reader that evidence is a matter of the number of witnesses called, without reference to their credentials. By the time we reach page 307, the incredible roll-call is in full spate:

> ' C. H. Page, A. Cassagne, Joseph Bédier and Paul Hasard, Jean de Cours and Louis Seylaz testify directly to Poe's influence on the *Parnassian* movement . . .
>
> ' Caroline Tickner and C. Alphonsus Smith testify to Poe's influence on the *Vers-libristes*.
>
> ' C. H. Page, J. K. Huysmans, John W. Roberts and Louis Seylaz, etc., etc., etc.

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[1] C. P. Cambiaire: *The Influence of E. A. Poe in France.*

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The meaningless torrent flows on for another five pages. But is it a meaningless torrent? Would it not be nearer the truth of our times to call it a monument to Work for Work's sake?

Baudelaire's discovery of Edgar Allen Poe started a cult of the American poet in France which became so thoroughly sustained that it has been possible to regard him as a *poète francisé*. Is it unreasonable to suggest that a student who had the courage to undertake the task of tracing the ramifying influence of Poe's lyrics, tales and theories through the labyrinths of recent French literature, and the persistence to produce a work which, imperfect as it is, was considered worthy of publication, might more profitably have employed such positive faculties as his effort reveals in pursuing a less ambitious and exacting programme? Statistics, bibliography or cataloguing—any work of a kind not involving taste—might have enabled this student to produce a basis of simple reliable facts upon which future investigators with other gifts could build with gratitude for his labours.

As it is, one may fear that in their avidity for a work of reference, unwary students may pass over those modest-looking *Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe* prefixed by Baudelaire to a translation of the tales which he published as the *Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires*. If that should happen the misguided enquirers would have missed one of the most curious examples of a specific influence which they are likely to find in modern literature.

We know how often the contemporary student makes for the 'source-book' in preference to the source. What we do not yet realize is how far contemporary modes of teaching and studying literature are leading students into a limbo which is neither literature nor history by overstressing another of those dangerous techniques which are one of the curses of modern education, and which so often embarrass and distract the mind in its quest of an essential experience.

P. MANSELL JONES.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

APOLOGY TO 'THE TIMES.'

In our March issue there appeared in the course of our review of 'The Times in School' the following passage:

'It (*i.e. The Times*) is obviously a Government mouthpiece, perhaps with a more intimate connection than we are allowed to know. Information like that published in the *Week* (No. 77) is not often available—it was alleged that the Vickers agent and *The Times* correspondent at Bucharest were one and the same person. Nor is the list of directors reassuring. Besides seven individual directors, there are seven other directories held by twenty-three assorted banks, assurance companies, railways, etc. This list, and the figures for the excess preference dividends since the War, colour the charge that *The Times* is an organ of "capitalist propaganda" —that is, a paper which profits by and helps to preserve the *status quo*.'

We are informed that these words have been understood as suggesting that *The Times* is not independent or impartial, that there is a secret liaison between it and the Government, and that its news and views are dictated by the Government and published for a financial consideration. No such suggestion was intended to be conveyed by us, and we regret that words were used which were capable of such an interpretation. We wish to tender our sincere apologies to *The Times* and unreservedly to withdraw any words which might be taken to convey any such suggestion, which is, of course, completely unfounded.

We wish, moreover, to say that we were misinformed when we stated that certain *Times* directorships are held by banks, assurance companies, railways, etc. There is no foundation in fact for this statement, or for the suggestion that the Vickers agent and *The Times* correspondent at Bucharest are one and the same person.

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EXPERIMENT IN ARDEN.

Reports have come in of an illustriously sponsored film, designed for use in the teaching of Shakespeare, which had several private showings in London early this year and is now available for use in schools equipped with cinematograph apparatus. It begins by showing Stratford *en fête* on a Shakespeare festival day, Anne Hathaway's cottage and garden and bits of the surrounding country (To see all this must be almost as good as carrying a daffodil in the procession) and then goes on to serious business. Passages from Shakespeare are read aloud and various shots ' illustrate ' the imagery: a sunrise flatters some mountain tops, and there are the flowers of proud-pied April, and an Elizabethan wine tun and a sow with her young, and a German field gun firing a shell at some buildings shows you what ' war ' is like. This sounds so exciting that one is tempted to ask for more—the scraps and greasy reliques of Cressida's o'er-eaten faith, for instance, or Dr. Johnson's ministers of vengeance peeping through their blanket ; but something other than ribald comment is called for.

It is, of course, quite impossible even to suggest by visual means either the kind of control that Shakespeare exercises—determining exactly the kind of attention to be given to the imagery at any point—or the way in which images drawn from different fields of experience combine in a new experience with a life of its own. But a venture of this kind is worse than inadequate. The substance of Shakespeare's verse—that which calls the whole soul of man into activity—*is* the imagery, and to encourage the monstrous misunderstanding that imagery means merely visual imagery is to incapacitate for reading Shakespeare altogether. The film seems to be mainly important as a symptom of the aimlessness of contemporary education. One of its chief functions, we imagine, will be to induce a feeling of up-to-dateness in schoolmasters who don't know what to teach.

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AMERICAN AND ENGLISH EARTH

MY NEXT BRIDE, Kay Boyle (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

PYLON, by William Faulkner (Chatto and Windus, 7/6).

THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE and other stories, by William Saroyan (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

AMERICAN EARTH, by Erskine Caldwell (Martin Secker, 7/6).

CAPTAIN PATCH, Twenty-one stories by T. F. Powys (Chatto and Windus, 7/6).

Among the Lost, one of the sketches in *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze,* might well have served for title to the two novels on this list, *My Next Bride* and *Pylon.* The principal characters in both are cut off from the society in which they live. A further peculiarity common to these novels is that their authors, instead of contrasting the lives of their characters with the rooted life of the community from which they have escaped and resting their novels on the values of such a life and in consequence laying emphasis on the loss involved in isolation from this life, on the contrary surround their characters with the glamour of fallen angels, regarding their lives as more significant, more splendid than that of the forsaken community. The authors are consequently on a level with their principal characters on whom they provide admiring and uncritical comment.

This is rather a precarious position and one which robs both works of any value as contributions to literature. The consequences of adopting such a position are worth noting. Chief and most irritating of these is the complete vagueness in which the ' positive ' values on which the authors rely are left. In *My Next Bride* it is explicitly never more than a ' something ' or a ' whatever it is.' Further, all that is implied in ' character ' disappears, so that it is impossible to find persons in these novels. Nor can we discover states of mind more or less connected. In abandoning the civilized standpoint the authors appear to lose the power of constructing individuals and are compelled to substitute for them strings of high-flown metaphors and sudden unexplained acts. It is as being other than human that they are admired. Their position is true Bohemianism. It is not surprising in this topsy-turvy atmosphere

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that the trivial is decked out with the same portentousness as the relatively (on any scale) important. A striking blemish in both books is the excited, throbbing, sentimentally poetic ' style ' which is laid on impartially throughout.

Enough has now been said to show what sort of attention these novels deserve. A short account of both will substantiate the general remarks and perhaps throw a little light on two weaknesses to which Americans seem especially liable. To find one's bearings in *My Next Bride* one has to recollect the tone of certain obituary notices in *transition*, the poet-and-painter fancying of Gertrude Stein and others, in short the American colony in Paris since the war. A young American girl impelled by something or other in the blood leaves home to seek she knows not what in Paris. She is poor and is unable to get work. In her *pension* are two old ladies expelled from Russia who are also starving. One of the main themes of the book is their struggle between ' Pride,' ' Lineage ' (they knew the Romanoffs) and poverty. These two introduce the girl to another exile, an American Indian (or with a strong admixture of Indian blood) who has come so far down in the world as to be instructing the petty bourgeois of Paris in the Simple Life and selling hand-made scarves and things to rich American tourists. He in turn is subjected to the admiration (with some reserves it is true) due to all Exiles. The following is a typical example of the language and sentiment and manner of presentation adopted by the authoress throughout. (The American Indian is called Sorrel and the girl Victoria).

> ' Sorrel did not speak again, but when he turned his head and looked at Victoria there was a shyness in his face, an uneasiness that she had recognized the utter speechlessness of the rôle he was now made to play. His eyes were clear as lakes, and beauteously fringed, but loneliness or hopelessness or fright twisted his face into a small voice crying out in silence: Victoria, I am an old man lost among peasants, French shop-girls, vaudeville artists, Greeks come up out of their own country kicking their heels up in a strange land. Nobody that was there is here now, or knows the tune of Waal I'll be switched the hay ain't pitched or the sound of thunder in the Alleghenies. Victoria, Victoria, said the sound of his face over and over until she got up to go.'

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She next meets with a rich American who combines high finance (out of filial respect) with painting and enjoying the latest thing in poetry. She falls in love with him but he is attached to his wife though perfectly willing to satisfy her. The curious thing about this young man is that he is the walking embodiment of the style (of which a small section has been quoted). In fact *he* might very well have written the novel ; which is another way of saying there are no men at all in the novel. The first serious contact between the lovers is made to the accompaniment of a rapid succession of cocktails and similar violent stimulants. Victoria takes to drink and promiscuity as a way out of the impasse. (We shall meet the same thing in *Pylon*). It seems that drunkenness providing it be extreme is one of the ' positives ' we have been looking for. It is the sanctioned support and refuge of our isolated protagonists. In the course of one of her bouts Victoria conceives and on becoming aware of this determines a little late in the day to procure an abortion. The novel now reaches its climax. We are treated to luscious and over-coloured descriptions of the effects of taking ' pills ' which occupy the third and last section of the book. It would be perhaps unfair to inflict samples on the reader especially as the horror seems to be one largely private to the authoress and the situation is worked up with loathing fascination and the style is here fully deployed. The book ends with Victoria and the man's wife on the way to a less messy method of abortion when they see in the paper that the hero has committed suicide. The heroine breaks down and we are supposed it is clear to feel that something tragic has occurred, that this man represents something of worth which has now disappeared or that his killing himself is a tragic act. It is shown that his death was due to fear, fear of the social order, and if we are to sympathize with him we must condemn this order. This I take to be the central attitude: society is the bully, the enemy which itself valueless prevents what is of value existing and functioning.

The central characters of *Pylon* are more emphatically cut off from their roots than the Paris-Americans. They are a trio, two men and a woman who make their living by risking their lives in and out of aeroplanes. They exercise a powerful fascination over the author which is partially explained by the comments of another character, a journalist, who is himself fascinated by them and in

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love with the woman. The reporter, we are told was ' a creature who apparently never had any parents either and who will not be old and never was a child.' We are reminded throughout the novel that even for ordinary people the life of an airman going all round the American continent and stopping nowhere would tend to uproot those following it. But, it is strongly insisted on, these are no ordinary people. ' They ain't human, you see. No ties ; no place where you were born and have to go back to it now and then even if its just only to hate the damn place good and comfortable for a day or two ' (This was the practice of the rich young man in *My Next Bride*). Faulkner makes it quite clear what they are for him in one of the recurring passages where the rhythm becomes ' poetical ' (and in fact called poems by one critic).

> ' Above the shuffle and murmur of feet in the lobby and above the clash and clatter of crockery in the restaurant the amplified vioce still spoke, profound and effortless, as though it were the voice of the steel-and-chromium mausoleum itself, talking of creatures imbued with motion though not with life and incomprehensible to the puny crawling pain-webbed globe, incapable of suffering, wombed and born complete and instantaneous, cunning, intricate and deadly, from out some blind iron bat-cave of the earth's prime foundation.'

It seems that the close and constant contact with their machines and the absence of human contacts has transmuted them into an altogether different and superior kind of thing to a mere human being. Or, as we have it from the reporter's lips (the woman is had in common by the two men, of whom one is her husband, and they have a son between them) : ' With one hand he supported the boy on his shoulder, feeling through the harsh khaki the young brief living flesh. " Yair ; cut him and its cylinder oil ; dissect him and it ain't bones: it's little rocker-arms and connecting rods." ' Since their life is concentrated in the six and a half minutes of flying twenty-five miles it is of no importance the reporter argues what they do with themselves at night. This, however, is only one of his views ; he also takes the line, ' It ain't adultery ; you can't any more imagine two of them making love than you can two of them aeroplanes back in the corner of the hanger, coupled.' But though they do show very few signs of

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life (principally courage) their love-making is only too real to the reporter. He is however rebuffed and made to feel that he can have no contact with them. Indeed by interfering in their affairs he is instrumental in bringing one of the men to his death.

The final comment on these people seems to be that they are not worth the attention the author bestows on them. He himself is hard put to it to explain their motives and what makes them so significant. The reporter's response to the death of the one and the departure of the others is—to get drunk.

Mr. Saroyan's stories are mostly about ' Myself.' ' Myself ' is among other things the son of an Armenian who lived and died an exile in America ; ' Myself ' has known poverty and the degradation forced on the poor in American cities ; is aware of ' culture ' and its pointlessness in the present environment ; is a writer —no not the clever satirical kind (though he *could* say a smart thing or two about any current idol you like to mention) ; specializes in adolescence (the ' young ' and ' daring '). All this in a persuasive ventriloquial style through the lips of the various dummies, some of which have been enumerated. It is not impossible that he may come to write something one day: at present his gestures towards more serious stuff are distressingly vague. He never gets beyond talking about what he wants to present (the ' truth,' ' the dignity of man '). On the other hand, the showmanship gift may prove too strong for him. Like the novelists he attempts higher flights in a bastard poetical prose.

The next two writers on the list are familiar with life in the country, with small communities and simple ways, and they write from their experience. *American Earth* is a very slight work ; the author is working well within his limits and not aiming very high. The anecdotes he tells bear on the peculiar ways of his country folk and afford a superficial insight into their way of living. They seem to have been chosen because they made good situations. Mr. Powys, as everyone knows, is at grips with more than *mœurs* ; his stories draw their strength from the world he has made from himself.

What distinguishes his work from all that considered here is the deliberate and formal nature of each story. He has no need to resort to another medium to obtain concentrated expression. And, of course, the range of experience he can draw upon is con-

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siderable. But when all this has been said there remain considerable reserves. The life and significance of his main themes is too easily borrowed ; the discoveries made in the novels are reduced to formulæ and combined in a series of ingenious and frigid variations. Nor is Mr. Powys all the time dealing with his ultimate allegories, nor is his smile always that of a balanced understanding. Quite often we are introduced to the whimsical and asked to pay it the same respect we owe to the rich humour offered by Mr. Powys at his best. Quite often he sinks to the level of *Kindness in a Corner*.

H. A. MASON.

L. H. MYERS

THE ROOT AND THE FLOWER, by L. H. Myers (Cape, 8/6).

The Root and the Flower comprises the first three parts of a still unfinished work. It consists in a reprint of *The Near and the Far* and *Prince Jali* with the addition of a new novel, *Rajah Amar*, which carries the story to the point where a critical struggle is about to break out in the world of public affairs. It also develops the earlier themes of private, personal relationships, pre-eminently by revealing Amar's half-resisted realization that his decision to retire from the world is flawed ; especially that his wife's love for Hari disturbs the peace which spiritual discipline should have brought him. Some of the best parts of the book are devoted to the gradual manifesting of this crack in Amar's spirit.

But *Rajah Amar* is chiefly important for the way it extends the significance of the whole work and clarifies its pattern. As the book now stands it reveals very clearly Mr. Myers' position and purpose as a novelist. While in his plot and incidents he manipulates worldly affairs in all their complication of detail he does so only because he sees them as penetrated by spiritual principles ; and conversely, since as he makes a character say ' it is almost impossible to conceive of spiritual values as existing apart from personality,' he is concerned with general themes only as they take shape amongst the complexities of individual lives.

Rajah Amar is from one point of view a study in the dilemma of a man who has always contrasted spirituality and worldly

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affairs: Amar, hoping to retire from the world, is left at the end face to face with active evil, a spiritual force working in the world. His retirement could not now be from worldly to spiritual things; instead it would mean yielding an advantage to a real force which is working against all that he values.

Evil, as Mr. Myers conceives it, springs first from a mere refusal to advance beyond trivial interests ('triviality . . . is the chief barrier between men and God'), but it shows itself finally as a cruel and malicious desire to cause suffering to anyone, without personal discrimination, who has rejected trivialities. But the abstract exposition of this view by one of the characters is only a small (though essential) part of its presentation. It only brings into sharper focus impressions which incidents and personality have been making subtly throughout the three books, and it is followed by the vividly concrete climax where Amar finally recognizes Daniyal as not only trivial but also an agent of evil.

To speak of 'evil' in this way inevitably suggests the archaic, and it is a very great achievement to have given a completely modern significance to the conception. The more usual modern view that evil is merely the absence of 'goodwill guided by reason' is represented in this novel by Smith, a humanist traveller from Europe. His rather sudden introduction (all the other threads of the story having been there from the beginning) has a faintly Shavian creaking, but he rapidly gathers necessity and ironical significance, his rational enlightenment working itself into the pattern as an unintentional ally of Daniyal's evil.

As a matter of psychological vocabulary Mr. Myers' 'spiritual sense' could no doubt be disputed and its ultimate distinction from some conceptions of 'reason' be questioned. Fortunately, however, he is a novelist. And with Smith as the exponent of 'the harmonious interaction of aesthetic, rational, and ethical intuitions' we can readily agree on the necessity of a spiritual sense that transcends these. This 'faculty of spiritual discrimination . . . is the co-ordinator of judgments by standards that otherwise have nothing in common. It is the judge between the pronouncements of any two, or more, modes of sensibility, when they appear to be out of harmony.' It is perhaps to be taken as the general principle of living development, with aesthetic, rational, and ethical intuitions derived from it as differentiations in particular

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directions. Anyhow the facts are here, subtly observed ; and if they won't fit a ready-made psychology so much the worse for the psychology. It is because Mr. Myers is working so completely as a novelist, besides having so much wider a range than most novelists, that his achievement is of the kind that should help to form an adequate psychology.

D. W. HARDING.

UNTOUCHABLE, by Mulk Raj Anand (Wishart, 7/6).

India offers immense potential resources to anyone who can lay hands on them. The novelist is no exception to the rule. Mr. Mulk Raj Anand is to be congratulated in dealing with an inveterate social problem that under the new Reform Scheme will be politically perpetuated. The Untouchable problem in India is only another form of fascist ostracism of a class which is given a sub-human distortion. The Nordic Aryan has for his prototype the Brahmin—who alone by birth has the right to spiritual, political and economic advancement. He has the ' sanction ' of his religion. Whereas the ' Untouchable,' in order to exist, must strive on a bestial level.

There have been several ' efforts ' made to solve the problem. Christian missionaries have attempted to invade the homes of the Untouchables with the help of the Cross. And at present Mr. Ghandi is active with his ' Harijan ' campaign, but it is mystical, muddle-headed and futile. The ludicrous nature of Mr. Ghandi's approach could be seen when he connected last year's earthquake tragedy in the province of Bihar and Orissa as a direct intervention and ' punishment from God ' for the existence of the Untouchable problem. (Mr. Ghandi will forgive me for not quoting his actual text, but since I do not possess it now, I hope I have conveyed the spirit of his remark).

By caste Mr. Anand is a Kshatriya, the second caste in the ' touchable ' Hindu hierarchy, but he is not tainted with the pollution-complex. He represents the youth of India who take a detached view of the problem and are no longer ' ineffectual angels.' He delves into the economic causes which are ultimately at the root of this pernicious system. And he does so very

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effectively. The novel is ' propagandist ' in nature, nevertheless it is completely realized in the main theme. Mr. E. M. Foster, the author of *A Passage to India,* has written an admirable preface. He says, justly: ' *Untouchable* could only have been written by an Indian and by an Indian who observed from the outside . . . And no Untouchable could have written the book because he would have been involved in indignation and self-pity. Mr. Anand stands in the ideal position.'

BOMAN MEHTA.

THE ETERNAL SMILE, by Pär Lagerkvist. Translated by Denys W. Harding and Erik Mesterton (Gordon Fraser, 5/-).

For a writer to be well known in the land of his birth and scarcely heard of in neighbouring countries is not always a sign of unimportance. There are exceptions even to the reverse of prophets without honour. Pär Lagerkvist, up to a point, is an example. Regarded by many in Sweden as outstanding among contemporary Scandinavian writers, he has had to wait fifteen years for the first translation of his work into English. And only the enthusiasm of his translators, coupled with the faith of an extremely enterprising publisher, is responsible for the appearance, even at this date, of *Det eviga leendet.* How far this short work will serve to introduce Lagerkvist to English readers and so pave the way for further translations is open to doubt: a more pertinent question is how far Lagerkvist himself is really a writer of outstanding importance awaiting due recognition outside his own country.

And here let me say at once that, apart from *The Eternal Smile,* I have read of Lagerkvist's works only *The Hangman* (a play) and a miscellaneous collection of tales and sketches—all in translation and for the most part in manuscript. So that it is only certain aspects of his work that I am at all qualified to discuss. What makes me think these aspects perhaps important is that they reveal qualities common to all three of the books which I have read.

Most remarkable of these qualities, or the most likely to impress itself first on the general reader, is Lagerkvist's predilection

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for a particular literary form—a blend of allegory, folk-tale and direct narrative. Referring to it in a note on the wrapper, the translators speak of his ' vivid sense of the detail of living experience combined with his freedom from the restrictions of realistic convention.' It is an apt description, the more so because it indicates both the strength and, to my mind, the weakness of Lagerkvist's writing. In the exact and careful observation of nature, in the highly selective use of material, he certainly displays ' a vivid sense of the detail of living experience.' In *The Eternal Smile*, particularly in those parts where the Dead recall incidents of their lives, there are passages of great descriptive beauty whose variety and clarity of image compel one's admiration. But the use of detail, even the exact, economic and sensitive use of it which Lagerkvist exploits so admirably, is not in itself the sum of good writing. There must be something more, some kind of imaginative experience ordering the process or the result is better only in degree than the unselective, photographic realism of a Galsworthy or a detective novel.

It is just here that the question of form, and Lagerkvist's particular method of presentation, is significant. For though it is perfectly true that his peculiar blend of fact and fancy, of exact detail and exotic fable, does provide an escape from ' the restrictions of realistic convention,' there is a price to be paid for this freedom. Moreover Lagerkvist, one has to remember, is not the first, particularly among Scandinavian writers, to exploit such a method of treatment. The counterpointing of fact and fable, ' romantic realism ' as one might call it, has a tradition of its own, in which only the greatest have achieved success. For it is one thing to create a world in which the facts of normal experience are transcended ; it is quite another to justify this by the revelation of some imaginative truth. Yet without the latter no literary ' form,' however adroitly conceived and used, is worth more than an acrostic. And it is in this respect that I seem to find Lagerkvist ultimately unsatisfying. After so much preparation, so elaborate a literary ritual, the mysteries, I cannot help feeling, should be a little more impressive than they turn out to be. And the difference between the expectation and the event is the measure, it seems to me, not only of one's disappointment but of the artist's failure to justify his pretension. Ultimately, I suppose, it is a question

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of quality of feeling—or rather of thought and feeling. And here the finer subtleties of language are of such importance that it would seem unfair to judge a writer in translation were it not unmistakably clear that the translation is as good as it could be. Whatever is present in the Swedish that is not also present in the English is nothing, I am convinced, that would affect one's judgment of Lagerkvist as a writer. Indeed it is an ironic corollary of the translation's excellence that it reveals his deficiencies as plainly as his merits. I have tried to suggest why, despite a great admiration for the latter, Lagerkvist seems to me a writer to be more favourably compared to James Stephens, say, than to Hans Andersen.

I. M. PARSONS.

THE POEMS OF JOHN CLARE. Edited by J. W. Tibble. (Two Volumes, 25s. net complete).

The exhaustive collection of Clare's poems now for the first time published is intended to complete the work of restoration with which Mr. Edmund Blunden, appropriately, has been associated. But whether it will add anything actual to the reputation the 1920 selection established is doubtful. It may well have the contrary effect of reinforcing the reader's sense of Clare's limitations. There is certainly here an overwhelming quantity of genuine stuff, but a stuff that is all of the same sort, so that the ultimate effect of it in such bulk is to emphasize its own sameness. We may find, it is true, a number of precious things in it which might well have replaced some of the things in the selection. The selection was not simply a selection, but was, we are reminded by Mr. Tibble, a *representative* selection. This suggests that the criterion was not solely one of intrinsic value. It seems to have been part of the purpose to represent different phases of Clare's development. Actually what is of value in Clare's work seems to develop singularly little, and this is a radically adverse criticism to make of any poet. Certain of the Asylum poems have been seen as something different, marking a final phase, and have even been regarded as Clare's finest work. There is in these an ecstatic note and occasionally a hint that Victorian influences have filtered

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through, but only the fact that they are nearer to what the nineteenth century had learnt to think poetry ought to be like could have blinded readers to their unsatisfactoriness in comparison with Clare's characteristic work, which remains essentially eighteenth century in quality.

What an edition of the collected poems does facilitate is a study of the particular influences which formed and later informed Clare's work. In his earlier work the influences of Thomson, Shenstone, Collins, Gray, Cowper and Crabbe separately are explicit, and the ' literary ' eighteenth century remains implicit throughout his work. The following lines come comparatively late:

> From every nook the smile of plenty calls,
> And reasty flitches decorate the walls,
> *Moore's Almanack* where wonders never cease—
> All smeared with candle-snuff and bacon-grease.

It would be impossible to mistake these lines for Pope, but it is equally impossible not to recognize that but for Pope they would not have existed as what they are. This relationship between Clare's characteristic (which is also his valuable) work and the ' literary ' eighteenth century is what distinguishes him from Burns, with whom, as a ' peasant poet,' he has often been compared, and whose work provoked him to one or two imitations. Clare's very revealing autobiographical fragment[1] helps to explain the difference. His parents he tells us were illiterate, except that his father could read a little in the Bible, but his father was ' fond of Ballads, and I have heard him make a boast of it over his horn of ale, with his merry companions, that he could sing or recite above a hundred.' At the age of thirteen (he thinks it was) a frament of Thomson's *Seasons* fell into his hands. From that time he educated himself as a poet solely through frequentation of the ' literary ' poets of the eighteenth century, and even learnt rather to despise as ' trash ' the Ballads of his father. At the same time, though he thus became a ' literary ' poet, he continued to share even as such a poet the traditional life of the countryside. Also he is notably free at his best from the Miltonic inversions

[1] *Sketches in the Life of John Clare by Himself*, edited by Edmund Blunden.

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and diction of his ' literary ' masters, though there are traces in his work of the *L'Allegro* Milton as well as of the blank verse Milton who so tyrannized over the later eighteenth century. He even draws considerably upon the vocabulary of peasant speech. To this extent he has indeed a certain affinity with Burns. But I notice that Mr. Adrian Bell deals with this aspect of Clare's work in his review in the *Spectator*.

It is easier to see why Clare is a poet than why he is not a great poet. His poetry, and that considering his facility is a surprisingly large proportion of his work, is the product of an extraordinary intimacy with the nature that surrounded him, particularly with the *minutiæ*, insects, blossoms, of the inexhaustible meadow-life. He is a nature-poet as Wordsworth is not, for Wordsworth is a psychologist interested fundamentally in the workings of his mind. What Clare's poetry evidences is a complete absorption with that other life, not felt as another life. It consists of perceptions crystallized richly and presented with a particularity and concreteness which are a warrant of their absolute authenticity. Yet it is a profusion that is spilt, almost one is tempted to say let run to waste. Clare has no hard core of individuality compelling his perceptions to serve an inner purpose. He has no inner purpose. He is scarcely even conscious of himself. It is this which distinguishes him from Mr. Blunden as a poet. Mr. Blunden's is a poetical world specially created with the aid of the ' literary ' eighteenth century from memories of a world known in boyhood but more than half passed away ; it suggests a poet who is extremely self-conscious, but sure neither of himself nor of the world he now lives in. It is what distinguishes Clare also from the great poets[1] Wordsworth and Keats (Clare's poetry is often just as rich in sensation as the *Ode to Autumn* of Keats) who begin from particular observation whereas Clare both begins and ends there.

JOHN SPEIRS.

[1]Even from the Coleridge of *This Lime-Tree Bower* and *Frost at Midnight*.

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MARIANNE MOORE

SELECTED POEMS, by Marianne Moore (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

This volume of Miss Moore's verse leaves me defeated and exasperated. When it arrived I remembered that I had imported when it appeared, ten years ago, a copy of her *Observations*, from which a large portion of the present selection comes ; investigation, prompted by a guilty misgiving, revealed that not half the pages had been cut. Mr. Eliot's introduction to the present volume is calculated to ensure a really stubborn assault :

> ' My conviction, for what it is worth, has remained unchanged for the last fourteen years : that Miss Moore's poems form part of the small body of durable poetry written in our time ; of that small body of writings, among what passes for poetry, in which an original sensibility and alert intelligence and deep feeling have been engaged in maintaining the life of the English language.'

So runs the impressive conclusion to an interesting and persuasive commentary. And one has been led to expect that a considerable effort will be required of one :

> ' The bewilderment consequent upon trying to follow so alert an eye, so quick a process of association, may produce the effect of some " metaphysical " poetry. To the moderately intellectual the poems may appear to be intellectual exercises ; only to those whose intellection moves more easily will they immediately appear to have emotional value.'

I am forced to conclude either that Mr. Eliot is specially advantaged by familiarity with the background of Miss Moore's poems and, perhaps, by having heard her own rendering and elucidation of them, or else that, if I am intellectual at all, it is very much less than moderately. For I have worked hard at them, applying myself to most of the book again and again at different sittings, and there is not one poem of which I can confidently say that I see the point. In some places where I think I see the point locally, what I see looks to me decidedly ponderous—as, for instance, this opening of *The Labours of Hercules* :

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To popularize the mule, its neat exterior
expressing the principle of accommodation reduced to a minimum:
to persuade one of austere taste, proud in the possession of home and a musician—
that the piano is a free field for etching ; that his ' charming tadpole notes '
belong to the past when one had time to play them . . .

The quotation, ' charming tadpole notes,' comes, we are told at the end of the book, from ' *The London Spectator.*' Quotations occur with great frequency in Miss Moore's poems, *Illustrated London News, The Epicure's Guide to France, National Geographic Magazine, New York Times Magazine, New York Sun, The Saints' Everlasting Rest, The Little Review, New Republic, Literary Digest, Ward's English Poets, London Graphic* and *Punch* being among the sources cited. ' Only the pedantic literalist could consider the subject-matter to be trivial ; the triviality is in himself . . . The result is often something that the majority will call frigid ; for feeling in one's own way, however intensely, is likely to look like frigidity to those who can only feel in accepted ways.' Mr. Eliot is referring to the imagist-descriptive aspect of Miss Moore's verse. It would be interesting to know what he would reply if one said that the collector's habit apparent in her quotations and the connoisseur's manner of their use are likely to be regarded with impatience by readers who have been encouraged to look for intensity of feeling.

Upon myself Miss Moore's preoccupation with visual description has the effect sometimes of suggesting that she has mistaken her art—that she should have chosen some other medium than words. I do indeed understand in a general way the nature of the interest that she has for Mr. Eliot: ' She seems to have saturated her mind in the perfections of prose, in its precision rather than its purple ; and to have found her rhythm, her poetry, her appreciation of the individual word, for herself . . . ' And I can see that fourteen years ago the stimulus she provided may have been such as to explain the present judgment: ' Miss Moore is, I believe, one of those few who have done the language some service in my lifetime.' But Mr. Eliot's remarks on her technique I find unsatisfying. ' Of *light* rhyme,' he says, ' Miss Moore is the greatest

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living master . . . It will be observed that the effect sometimes requires giving a word a slightly more analytical pronunciation, or stressing a syllable more than ordinarily . . . ' The effect on me—of rhyming, for instance on *a* and *the*—is as often as not irritating:

> but the Indian buffalo
> albino-
> footed, standing in the mud-lake, with a
> day's work to do. No white
> Christian heathen, way-
> laid by the Buddha

And Miss Moore's rhyming technique in general is something I cannot appreciate as it seems I ought. Nor do Mr. Eliot's general observations about the use of rhyme add to the weight that such a critic's judgment inevitably has for me:

> ' In the conventional forms of rhyme the stress given by the rhyme tends to fall in the same place as the stress given by the sense. The extreme case, at its best, is the pentameter couplet of Pope. Poets before and after Pope have given variety, sometimes at the expense of smoothness, by deliberately separating the stresses, from time to time ; but this separation—often effected simply by longer periods or more involved syntax—can hardly be considered as more than a deviation from the norm for the purpose of avoiding monotony. The tendency of some of the best contemporary poetry is of course to dispense with rhyme altogether ; but some of those who do use it have used it here and there to make a pattern directly in contrast with the sense and rhythm pattern, to give a greater intricacy. Some of the internal rhyming of Hopkins is to the point.'

I should like Mr. Eliot to point to an instance in Hopkins of what he has in mind. The account is not adequate to my impression of what seems to me Hopkins's best work. I should have said that Hopkins uses rhyme, as he uses alliteration, assonance and the other devices, in the interests of sense: as a means of organization, concentration and precision ; to control tempo, stress, intonation and gesture. And I do not know how Mr. Eliot's remarks on the pentameter couplet relate to the following (or

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where, if not here, he finds his ' deviation from the norm '):

> Is not our Mistresse faire Religion,
> As worthy of all our Soules devotion,
> As vertue was to the first blinded age?
> Are not heavens joyes as valiant to asswage
> Lusts, as earths honour was to them? Alas,
> As wee do them in meanes, shall they surpasse
> Us in the end, and shall thy fathers spirit
> Meete blinde Philosophers in heaven, whose merit
> Of strict life may be imputed faith, and heare
> Thee, whom hee taught so easie wayes and neare
> To follow, damn'd?

Donne's use of rhyme here is very different from Pope's ; yet it seems to me to be as decidedly a *use*, and not in the least in the nature of ' a deviation from the norm for the purpose of avoiding monotony.'

I ought, perhaps, in differing with so distinguished a critic, to have examined passages of Miss Moore's verse in detail. But such examination would have taken more room than can be spared, and those readers most likely to have commented on the deficiency will, for the most part, in any case insist on reading so authoritatively sponsored a book for themselves. I hope to be assured and convinced that I have been obtuse.

F. R. Leavis.

ELIZABETHAN DRAMA AND THE CRITIC

THEMES AND CONVENTIONS OF ELIZABETHAN TRAGEDY, by M. C. Bradbrook (Cambridge University Press, 12/6 net).

Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy falls neatly into two halves. Part I, ' The Theatre,' contains the results of a prodigious amount of research on the conventional elements in Elizabethan tragedies, together with useful summaries of relevant facts and opinions that are not yet commonplace. Part II consists of studies of half a dozen dramatists, including Marlowe, Tourneur, Webster and Middleton.

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The book, unlike Miss Bradbrook's earlier study,[1] is of a curiously mixed quality. It shows an extensive knowledge of the kind of thing Elizabethan audiences expected (or took for granted) in such matters as characterization, plotting, rhetoric and moral edification ; and one may hope that the naturalistic prejudices inherited from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are now finally dispelled. There is apt criticism scattered throughout, and some of the critical essays (those on Tourneur and on ' The Decadence,' for example) are admirable. There is in fact a good deal to be grateful for, but entangled with an equal amount that provokes quite a different reaction.

Miss Bradbrook is laudably anxious to dissociate herself from any merely crass reaction against nineteenth century standards (necessarily anxious too, modern criticism being infected with a grouping spirit: if you are not in one camp you are in another) ; but it is disturbing to find her disavowals so politely vague. ' In Shakespearean criticism,' she says, ' there has been such a violent reaction from the nineteenth century point of view that it is customary to refer to the play as though " the pattern of the imagery " or some other kindred abstraction were the axis of it.' This, we may agree, ' is as absurd as its antithesis,' but even if we were not so completely in the dark about the kindred abstraction it would not be at all clear who are the critics referred to ; if Miss Bradbrook meant Professor Wilson Knight or Miss Caroline Spurgeon, both of whom are mentioned favourably in the Preface, she should have said so. The ' caution ' that appears at the end of Chapter VIII is even more elusive: ' The study of Webster should provide a corrective to those who hastily assume that poetic structure is a matter of choice of words only, and not of permanent impulses behind the choice of words—a caution which seems not unnecessary in view of the recent developments of Elizabethan dramatic criticism.' Miss Spurgeon? Mr. Rylands? It is unlikely that Miss Bradbrook had in mind either of these critics, but my knowledge of recent Elizabethan criticism is not sufficient to fill up the blanks.

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[1] *Elizabethan Stage Conditions* (1932). The Cambridge University Press would perform a service by reprinting it: the title doesn't do justice to its scope.

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One has to notice this equivocal attitude, for whilst Miss Bradbrook is making ineffectual gestures in one direction she remains blind to the real dangers to decent criticism creeping up, as it were, behind her back. Criticism cannot suffer much from those odd heretics who ' assume that poetic structure is a matter of choice of words only, and not of permanent impulses behind the choice of words.' It can suffer a good deal from the formalizers and tabulators, pseudo-scholars who can do anything with poetry but read it, and who, if orthodoxy changes, will enumerate the themes of an Elizabethan tragedy as naïvely as they once listed the moral traits of Shakespeare's heroes or recorded the lapses from nature of Webster's ' wax-works.' These are not only ignored in Miss Bradbrook's protestations, they will be able to draw encouragement from her book.

It is largely a matter of tone and emphasis. In a context of acute critical analysis we may skim over a couple of references to counting images (pp. 175 and 194) as insignificant ; but they are in line with the respectful paragraph about ' Mr. Hubbard's tables ' (p. 98). ' Mr. Hubbard has calculated ten kinds of figures . . . ' and his calculations are considered relevant to a discussion of ' this matter of texture.' There are openings for a new pedantry here. Too often equal stress is laid on the important and the unimportant (' . . . Desdemona's Willow Song, the songs in *Cupid's Revenge* and *Valentinian* . . . ' p. 110), whilst the elaborate schematization attempted ' for critical convenience ' in Chapter III (' Conventions of Action ')—insecurely based, by the way, on the shifting meanings of the word ' action,' see pages 29, 45 and 51—is entirely misleading. It would not be true to say that all we need to know is that the Elizabethan drama is ' conventional,'[1] but in the middle of some of the more irrememberable

[1]Chapter IV, in which Miss Bradbrook illustrates the connexion between the drama and ' Elizabethan habits of reading, writing and listening '—implicitly reversing her previous judgment (*Elizabethan Stage Conditions*, p. 60) about the attentive powers of Shakespeare's audience—shows how studies of this kind can be made the starting point for exploring important aspects of contemporary life. The chapter—and I think I may add my ' Education and the Drama in the Age of Shakespeare ' (The

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information accumulated in Part I one wishes that Miss Bradbrook had kept in mind the admonition of her earlier book: that research is only justified when it 'corrects the critical focus' and clears the ground for criticism.

Miss Bradbrook has, in fact, blurred the distinctions that she made so plainly in *Elizabethan Stage Conditions*. Scholarship, or 'historic criticism,' she pointed out, 'to be of value must aim at providing an efficient weapon to be used by others and applied with different results by different people'; in the scholar 'the critic is bound to efface himself.' Scholarship, that is, is a means to an end, and even when the scholar uses literature to provide his data (for he is not confined to reports, diaries, etc.) the result is something different in kind from criticism. Now, 'The body of distinguished work represented by the names of Professors Caroline Spurgeon and Wilson Knight, Mr. T. S. Eliot, Mrs. Woolf, Miss Elizabeth Holmes and Mr. G. W. H. Rylands' may or may not reveal 'a tendency towards the unification of the scholarly and the critical forces' (p. vii) (It is hardly a claim that Mrs. Woolf would make for her essay on Ford's Annabella), but the effect of *Themes and Conventions* is to encourage the *substitution* of a form of scholarship for criticism. When that happens we have detached observations, made at a lower level of intensity and delicacy, which, instead of implicitly admitting their purely preliminary usefulness in the realm of objective fact, have the air of dealing with the artistic experience itself. And this is mischievous, for it either distorts the experience or stops appreciation not quite half way.

It is, I think, this kind of distortion that we find in the least satisfactory chapter of the second Part, namely that on Webster, whose 'verbal structure,' we have been told, 'is extremely complex.' But the verbal complexity of Webster only reveals itself when we count, collect, and card-index our findings; the play does not *function* as a complex whole. In *The White Devil*,

> 'The violence of the action is paralleled by images of disorder. Cornelia sees Brachiano as a calamity of nature, an "earthquake." He retorts to her:

Criterion, July, 1932)—is relevant in connection with the present interest in the possibilities of a poetic drama.

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> Thy rash tongue
> Hath raised a fearful and prodigious storm. (I.2.298-9).

The Cardinal calls Ludovico a " foul black cloud " threatening a storm. Vittoria is to Monticelso like " Shipwrecks in calmest weather," and at her death she cries:

> My soul like to a ship in a black storm
> Is driven I know not whither.' (V.6.248-9).

But, starting from the kind of activity and attention that Webster demands from the reader, and going on to his disregard for ' the structure of the feelings as a whole ' which Miss Bradbrook notes as a mere item on the debit side, it would be easy to show why these images are not in any organic relation, as are, say, the images of power and fertility in *Antony and Cleopatra* or the ' images of disorder ' in *Macbeth*. And when we are dealing in detachable parts, bringing them together, as it were, outside the total context, we are at liberty to read into them any kind—and amount—of Significance, as Miss Bradbrook does throughout her account of *The Duchess of Malfi* (frequently compared, we notice, to *Lear*). Thus, after the masque of madmen (IV.2) Bosola, disguised as an old man (' The larger purpose is to symbolize Time and the decay of the temporal '), continues the torture of the Duchess in his catechism:

> ' Didst thou ever behold a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass, and the Heaven o'er our heads like her looking glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison.'

Miss Bradbrook's comment here is:

> ' Imprisonment is no longer the special lot of the Duchess, but that of all: " bones built in us, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse " of Time and Place.'

This, I admit is part of an extended argument ; but what Miss Bradbrook should have noticed is that the caged lark simile (it seems to me a feeble one) follows half a dozen analogies (' What's this flesh? a little crudded milk, fantastical puff-paste,' etc.) which completely inhibit any response at the level indicated by the

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quotation from Hopkins. But the passages quoted from this play are consistently misread.

> The Heavens o'er my head seem made of molten brass,
> The Earth of flaming sulphur: yet I am not mad.
> I am acquainted with sad misery
> As the tanned galley slave is with his oar,
> Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
> And custom makes it easy. (IV.2.27-32).

These, says Miss Bradbrook, are 'the most Dantesque lines in Webster; they alone would be sufficient to show that her afflictions are "not of this life."' One would have understood a reference to, say, the Shakespeare of *Richard II* (though Shakespeare would never have written 'sad misery'), but surely 'Dantesque' is not the word for anything so vaguely diffuse. If the lines show anything it is that Webster was not interested in understanding his emotions but, as in that central image, in exhibiting Feeling.

One reads the book, then, with a good deal of perplexity and, it must be confessed, annoyance. As I have indicated it contains things far superior to the Webster essay and one is continually jolted by the contradictions, the different levels of insight displayed. Miss Bradbrook can tell us—when the argument requires it—that 'The Romantics ignored the drama and concentrated on the poetry' (p. 52)—which is exactly what Lamb and Hazlitt did not do. On the other hand, some of her formulations deserve to be widely current; this, for example:

> 'The essential structure of Elizabethan drama lies not in the narrative or the characters but in the words. The greatest poets are also the greatest dramatists . . . A structure which was purely poetic offered nothing to the lesser dramatists, whereas our contemporary dramaturgy is equally useful to the mediocre writer and the good one' (p. 5).

It is because Elizabethan plays are important—when they are—for the poetry that they contain, that one cannot afford to see them reduced, as Miss Bradbrook at times reduces them, to an exercising ground for faculties which have not the appreciation of poetry (the extension of one's living interests) as a constantly present aim.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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CRITICISM AND LITERARY HISTORY

ENGLISH POETRY AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, by F. W. Bateson (Oxford, 6/-).

Mr. Bateson introduces his essay with some just criticism of the academic study of literature. The essay itself constitutes a much more radical criticism. For the unprofitable issue of an intention and an initiative in themselves so admirable must be charged to academic deficiencies. A critic as interested and energetic as Mr. Bateson ought not to have been able to be so unprovided with the elementary tools for his job, so unprepared by the elementary training, and so unaware of his plight.

But 'critic,' one gathers, is a description that he would repudiate. The nature of the distinction that, in his opening pages, he tries to elaborate between the critic and the literary historian is not clear, but he certainly intends a separation, and he calls his book *An Essay in Literary History*. Yet the kind of history that he undertakes could be successfully attempted only by a critic and would then be essentially literary criticism. For by 'history' he means something more than the usual compilation for the use of examinees—names, titles, dates, 'facts about,' irrelevancies, superficial comments and labour-saving descriptions; and he is determined that it shall be *literary* (his italics) history. But his notion of this remains vague:

> 'His objection to regarding literature as a function of the social organism is the literary critic's objection—not that it cannot be done, but that it can only be done by disregarding those elements in literature that distinguish good writing from bad. In the last resort, therefore, the literary historian stands or falls only in so far as he satisfies, or fails to satisfy, the literary critic. If the interpretation he proposes does not clarify the central and universal significance of the literature he is treating, it is worthless. His history may be excellent social history or economic history, but there is one thing it will not be: it will not be *literary* history.'

—Mr. Bateson assumes that he can, as a literary historian, take over the necessary criticism (betrayingly innocent assumption—where does he suppose this criticism is to be found?) and 'satisfy

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the literary critic ' without being one himself. And, looking round for something in terms of which he can safely ' interpret ' the history of poetry, he settles here:

> ' It is to words therefore, their history and science, that I invite the historian of poetry to turn. I suggest that poetry develops *pari passu* with the words it uses, that its history is a part of the general history of language, and that its changes of style and mood are merely the reflection of changing tendencies in the uses to which language is being put.'

' Word ' for him is a simple term ; ' denotation ' and ' connotation ' suffice for his perception of complexities (Dr. Richards's ' paradigm of the fluctuations of the word *word* ' would have come to him as an inhibiting revelation). But even with a more adequate analytic equipment he could not, except as a literary critic making a distinctively literary-critical approach, have written a more essentially *literary* history—a history, that is, unobnoxious to the considerations on which he dismisses the ' social ' and the ' economic.'

There can be no simple directions—no helpful ones—for writing the literary history that, when his thought is clarified, Mr. Bateson is desiderating (his ' words ' and ' language ' do not provide the guidance he supposes them to). The essential thing about such a history will be the focus, the centre of interest: the centre of interest will always be in literature, the focus always upon literary values. But ' literary values ' is an unsatisfactory phrase ; it says no more here than that the kind of attention, the discrimination, the eye for significance, will be the literary critic's.

Such a history—a history of English poetry—will be undertaken because the works of certain poets are judged to be of lasting value—of value in the present. When it takes account of other works it will not be because such works were published, had once perhaps a public, and are habitually referred to in histories of literature. It will take account of changes in taste and fashion, but will not confuse its business with that of a history of taste and fashion. Judgments of poetic value will determine and control its attention none the less strictly because its attention will not be confined to valuable poetry. As Mr. Bateson says:

> ' The English poets are not suspended in a vacuum. They

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> have relations and connexions both with each other and with the general life of their times, and it should be possible to illustrate and define those inter-connexions without falling into the verbose inanities of " influences " and " tendencies." '

—The ' illustrating ' and ' defining,' one must add, will be part of a strictly critical process—a process of evaluating, and of bringing out the significance of what is judged to be valuable. The desiderated ' history ' will be as much a work of criticism as a critique of a single poet is.

Such a history, then, could be accomplished only by a writer interested in, and intelligent about, the present. It would, for one thing, be an attempt to establish a perspective, to determine what of English poetry of the past is, or ought to be, alive for us now. The motive to it would be inseparable from an interest in the problems of contemporary poets—in the problems of their relation to tradition and to the contemporary world. Mr. Bateson's grounds for ' deliberately omitting to consider Mr. W. B. Yeats and Mr. T. S. Eliot '—' The one is an Irishman, the other an American, and the language they maltreat with such masterly virtuosity is not exactly English, but a sweeter and less stubborn instrument, a *dead* language '—are of a piece with his judgment that Mr. A. E. Housman benefitted by ' the language's gains in precision ' in the twenty years before *A Shropshire Lad*: ' *A Shropshire Lad* has exactly those qualities of directness, concision, and inevitability that Hopkins's style just misses.'

The relation of poetry to the language of its time, and also the state of that language (if a phrase that covers such a multitude of questions says anything at all) are obviously essential considerations. Mr. Bateson tends to be satisfied with considering ideas about language. Thus he explains the loose tautological fluency of the Elizabethans by the contemporary idea of ' linguistic flux '—an idea due to the constant importation of new words. ' They had an uneasy feeling all the time that their vocabulary was slipping away from under them, and suspecting and distrusting it, they did not dare to confide the whole of their meaning to a single word or phrase.' But who from a reading of the verse itself could bring away any other impression than that the poets delight in their prolix fluency, and cultivate it for its own sake,

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being not much troubled with any particular burden of meaning? Their practice is to be explained in terms of literary convention—in terms of a young tradition that had not yet struck roots in contemporary life: mere ' poetry,' the excitement of having it at all, was, for a while, good enough.

The most important development of the period, the development that brought the full vitality of the age into poetry and produced a poetry representing a marvellous development of the language, Mr. Bateson takes no note of. ' But the drama and the novel,' he tells us, ' are relatively impure forms of literature ' (also, ' I hold that drama, including poetic drama, is essentially a form of prose, because its *media* are not words but ideas . . . '). Nevertheless, how the advantages of the ' impurity ' by which Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Tourneur, Middleton and others profited might be regained for poets—this should be the underlying preoccupation of Mr. Bateson's ideal historian. Not that it need be obtruded, or even explicit, anywhere. But it would direct and inform the eye with which the historian observed the changing conditions determining, from age to age, the use of genius and talent (in the foreground of the field of attention coming those that fall under the head of literary tradition—the current heritage of conventions, technical proclivities, habits of expression and approach).

In considering the eighteenth century, for instance, he would not, as Mr. Bateson does, make Thomson, Young, Gray and Collins mainly an opportunity for elaborating an account of ' the baroque style ' (' The baroque style is rapid and inexact: it is rapid because inexact '). Instead he would notice that these poets represent a poetic tradition bearing a much less satisfactory relation to contemporary life than that borne either by the Metaphysical tradition or by the tradition that includes Pope and Johnson ; and he would inquire how it was that so unsatisfactory a tradition came to prevail, making poets ' literary ' and ' poetical ' in pejorative senses of those terms.

In the nineteenth century he would find himself considering similar problems: how came the Romantic tradition (on which, in its first phase, one's comment is that, though alive with the vitality of the age, it made so disappointing a use of the talents belonging to it) to result in a Victorian poetry so essentially turned

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away from the contemporary world and cut off from the sources of vitality? He would not find the differences between Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites as important as Mr. Bateson makes them. Pre-Raphaelite poetry, Mr. Bateson tells us, 'had been made possible by the vagueness of Mid-Victorian English; its function disappeared when the language became precise again.' What this language was that became precise again (and by what agency) he does not tell us; and he nowhere discusses the relation between Victorian poetry and the English spoken in the age. But: 'Hopkins was too early. The language had not increased sufficiently in precision by then for the massive concrete poetry of Hopkins to be possible at all without very special precautions. The clumsy, and, as one feels, unnecessary, concentration of his style was in fact necessary in 1876.' And: '*A Shropshire Lad* has exactly those qualities of directness, concision and inevitability that Hopkins's style just misses.'

These three quotations show the essential themes—or what should have been such for Mr. Bateson—completely missed.

F. R. LEAVIS.

MR. MURRY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, by John Middleton Murry (Cape, 10/6).

Not all the dislike and irritation that the earlier part of this book may set up can obscure the sharp sincerity and impressiveness of the ending, where Middleton Murry writes of the state of himself and Katherine Mansfield during her fatal illness. As he recreates his suffering here you realize how insulated he has been from the earlier events, how he has been describing things that seem to have no relation to the man recording them, in spite of comment, implicit but pervasive, from his present standpoint.

This volume of his autobiography goes up to the armistice of 1918 when he was twenty-nine. Its incidents have a gossip interest. Its continuity lies chiefly in Middleton Murry's efforts to discover or create a 'self' for himself and the discomfort he suffered among associates who seem to have been preoccupied with their 'selves.' Apparently he and all the others were clinging (as everyone tries

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to) to a form of self-sufficiency, some withholding of themselves, or drawing back, which shielded them from intimate exposure to each other although they wanted and expected each other's intimate support. He, though, escaped behind a surface malleability, where Lawrence withdrew into self-appointed leadership, and Katherine Mansfield into the manipulation of a sort of balance of power amongst her affections. But under the pressure of isolation from each other during the misery of the war Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry were brought to admit their dependence, even as 'selves,' on each other; and it is characteristic that for him the surrender necessarily involved his admission that *she* was dependent on *him*. 'No sooner had I reached England than I realized—what I never could realize—that Katherine was dependent on me' (p. 374). And then later, 'That [financial] independence, on which I set such store and which I stubbornly regarded as a virtue, had collapsed, because it was the defence behind which I shielded myself from the knowledge of my dependence on Katherine. That I had always refused to admit. But suddenly, she had spoken as she had never spoken before, called for me as she had never called before, flung herself to the winds in acknowledging that she was dependent on me. And at that, my last defences dissolved away. I knew that I was dependent on her, and I was free to acknowledge it' (p. 386).

How complete his union with her was isn't made certain. He himself can't question it while he writes from this point to the end of the book. But he says earlier, when he comments on the relationship he was aiming at with her, '. . . I was seeking in the idea of personal relation a satisfaction for an emptiness in my communal life.' And there are aspects even of the later narrative that suggest that he was not so entirely given up to her as he wished to believe. However his emergence from the disaster of her death and the way in which he found new beliefs remain to be described if he continues the autobiography.

There must be many readers, apart from those who would damn anything Middleton Murry wrote now, who will find this book in some way distasteful. For one thing, he doesn't convince you that his insight into himself is as complete as he believes, but that by itself wouldn't produce the unfortunate effect. It seems rather to be his comprehensive kindliness that puts you

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off, a solemn toleration that forbids him to blame anybody, even himself. He speaks of his ' effort to extenuate nothing,' but you feel that perhaps he hasn't had much temptation to extenuate at all, because once he's put it all down with as much honesty as he can achieve he finds himself incapable of giving blame—he understands too well. Inevitably you get the feeling that this degree of benignity is too godlike not to have a catch in it somewhere ; that there would be more real humility in standing by simpler fallible standards which would allow him to be a little unfair occasionally and perhaps even feel a little remorse. His belief in the inevitability of himself seems as distasteful as a cruder satisfaction with himself would be.

D. W. HARDING.

THE SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, a life of Charles Dickens, by Hugh Kingsmill (Wishart, 10/6).

Mr. Kingsmill sets out to interpret Dickens' work by a careful examination of his character—especially of his relations with parents, wife and friends. It was a dangerous task to undertake, and Mr. Kingsmill has done it surprisingly well. He might, so easily, have gone out of his way to shock ' Dickens-lovers,' but, although the book is not likely to be well received by those who regard Dickens as the greatest English novelist and an incarnation of all the domestic virtues, it is obvious that Mr. Kingsmill has never succumbed to the temptations of tickling them up to be amused by their reactions.

The main thesis of the book is intelligent and convincing—we see Dickens revenging himself on the imaginary neglect and callousness of his parents by presenting them as ludicrous characters such as Micawber, Mrs. Nickleby, old Dorrit—he had sufficient affection to prevent him from making the characters really objectionable ; we see him justifying his own lack of conventional respectability by holding it up to ridicule—with laboured comment—in such figures as Vholes in *Bleak House* ; again, realizing defects in his own character, he embodies them in a fictitious one and chastises it to atone for them—such figures, according to Mr. Kingsmill, are Jonas Chuzzlewit and Pecksniff. Strangest of all, and yet quite feasible, is the way in which he revenges himself on characters who were innocent spectators of his early humiliations—the boy,

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Bob Fagin, who was his friend and protector in the blacking-factory days, gave his name to the melodramatic scoundel of *Oliver Twist*.

All these examples are made most convincing, and it is difficult to think of any adequate refutation of them. Yet Mr. Kingsmill is apt to push his argument too far ; to present dogmatic statements without producing evidence, and to use as evidence, pieces of unimportant writing, showing Dickens at his most mechanical. For instance, he says of a character in *Oliver Twist*—' In the prostitute Nancy, half-way between entire wickedness and flawless virtue, Dickens symbolized his sense of guilt. His restlessness, his ceaseless desire to escape from life, are imaged in her appeal to Bill Sikes: " Let us both leave this dreadful place, and far apart lead better lives, and forget how we have lived except in prayers, and never see each other more. It is never too late to repent." ' In another passage Mr. Kingsmill speaks of a character in *David Copperfield* as the conventional prostitute of Victorian fiction—it is difficult to imagine anything more typical of what the Victorians thought a prostitute ought to say than the lines quoted ; Mr. Kingsmill here, and in other passages, is inclined to base facts on theories.

But, on the whole, Mr. Kingsmill's argument goes a long way to explain Dickens' genius, especially his extreme vividness of presentation, when at his best. Some strong element of personal experience is nearly always involved—very often wounded egotism; and the sentimentality which is the reverse side of egotism is almost entirely responsible for his grosser faults. The exaggeration so prominent in the novels, and which has such varying effects, is an obvious effect of this morbid self-love. But, in connection with this, Mr. Kingsmill makes a statement which, if accepted, causes us to revise our estimate of Dickens' humour—a statement which I, personally, cannot accept without question. He says ' His important characters, those, that is, whom he tried to elaborate or interpret, turned to dummies on his hands, becoming merely the vehicle of his unpurified emotionalism,' and, again, ' . . . he embodied his false sentiment in the unreal figure of Pecksniff, and thus expended the force of his attack on a puppet instead of on himself.' The first point to make here is that Dickens never elaborated a character—he never created a character in the round,

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at all. His virtuous characters are invariably lifeless figures—it is difficult to see why those who see the falsity of Little Nell should be amused by Joe Gargery—and his comic creations are not characters but 'Humours.' A 'humour' may be stressed but it can scarcely be elaborated. If we expect to find in Pecksniff a skilful and detailed study of a hypocrite we shall be disappointed; if we take him as the 'humour' of hypocrisy we shall admit Dickens' achievement. Neither Pecksniff nor any other character—with the possible exceptions of the autobiographical Pip and David Copperfield—develop, but in the skill with which Dickens places the typical utterance of the 'humour' in his character's mouth, magnifying it into something larger than life, and yet universal, he is not altogether unworthy of comparison with Ben Jonson.

It is fairly obvious that Dickens is in the line of 'humour' writers; his obvious ancestors are Ben Jonson and Smollett. His admiration for the latter is well-known; he seems to have preferred him to Fielding and Sterne, and it is easy to understand this, from his writings. Smollett had no subtlety; he is coarse and crude in a way that Fielding never is, and this element, toned down to Victorian requirements, is very obvious in Dickens. It is present in the violence of his melodramatic scenes—Mr. Kingsmill is good on the essential childishness of Dickens' horror; as we see in the letter to Forster quoted, on the probability of ghosts in solitary confinement prisons, he is out to make his own flesh creep quite as much as the reader's—and it is present in some of the humorous passages—a good example is one given in this book—Mrs. Gamp's account of Mr. Harris hiding his head in a dog kennel to prevent himself hearing the screams of his wife in child-birth.

The coarseness of Smollett is practically synonymous with his lack of subtlety, and Dickens was never subtle. The unconvincing eccentricities of Smollett's Commodore Trunnion are paralleled in the conventional nautical language of Captain Cuttle, which is no better than that of the 'jolly Jack Tar' of any nineteenth century melodrama.

But, on occasions, Dickens rises superior to Smollett and his points of affinity with Ben Jonson became clear. I feel that Pecksniff, whom Mr. Kingsmill dismisses as a puppet, is one of these occasions.

When Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist* says

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I will have all my beds blown up, not stuft ;
Down is too hard . . .
. . . Then, my glasses
Cut in more subtle angles, to disperse
And multiply the figures, as I walk
Naked between my succubae. My mists
I'll have of perfume, vapour'd 'bout the room,
To lose ourselves in ; and my baths, like pits
To fall into ; from whence we will come forth,
And roll us dry in gossamer and roses

he is not speaking like a real human being ; yet he is by no means a puppet. In his speeches the traits of the voluptuary are exaggerated, but crystallized in a few lines ; he is the humour of voluptuousness.

Dickens can never rise to these heights, because he always has to come forward in person to explain and denounce, but many of the speeches of Pecksniff have these seemingly contradictory qualities of exaggeration and concision. There is even a similarity in the speech of Dickens' characters to that of Ben Jonson's—the type of wit has resemblances. Ananias says to Surly, in his Spanish disguise:

They are profane,
Lewd, superstitious and idolatrous breeches.
. . . Thou look'st like antichrist, in that lewd hat.

We are amused immediately by the absurd application, by the ignorant zealot, of his hackneyed canting terms to ordinary articles of apparel. The wit comes from the portrayal of the muddled mind of a certain type, who can only express his disapproval by irrelevant terms, drawn from his narrow habit of thinking. In this speech of Pecksniff's we have a similar wit:

> 'I would not have believed it, Mr. Chuzzlewit, if a fiery Serpent had proclaimed it from the top of Salisbury Cathedral. I would have said that the Serpent lied. Such was my faith in Thomas Pinch that I would have cast the falsehood back into the Serpent's teeth.'

Here again, it is the muddled mind of an ignorant man seeking a short cut to impressiveness by joining the supernatural, with

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ludicrous effect, to the most prominent feature of the everyday landscape. This is, by no means, an isolated example—the resemblance to Ben Jonson can be verified throughout the best of Dickens' work.

Returning to Mr. Kingsmill, I feel that the greatest omission in his book is any discussion of Dickens' actual prose. It is this neglect that makes him so unfair to the later novels, particularly *Great Expectations*, which he dismisses as a ' factitious piece of work,' concentrating wilfully on its faults. These are many but the book is very free from his grosser defects—Joe Gargery and the death of Miss Havisham are the worst—and has a rather more mature outlook than most. The first chapters contain some of his best descriptive prose and prove that Dickens could write as well as any of his contemporaries when his personal feelings were not too violently engaged, or when he was not indulging in stock sentiments. Dickens' power of creating an atmosphere was considerable and nowhere does he succeed better than in the description of the Essex marshes in *Great Expectations*. The passage may be compared with the account of London on a foggy day that opens *Bleak House* ; the latter is marred by a facetiousness that is never absent for long in Dickens, but from which the *Great Expectations* passage is free. I can detect no real slackening of Dickens' powers in this book, or even in *Our Mutual Friend*, which contains a rich diversity of characters who gain, rather than lose, by the bad temper which Mr. Kingsmill stresses as a feature of Dickens' last years. (That the bad temper was there is painfully obvious in the essay quoted from *The Uncommercial Traveller* in which Dickens insists on bringing a young girl to court for swearing at him).

If Mr. Kingsmill had dealt more with the qualities of Dickens' actual writing, we might have had an interesting discussion of that facetiousness and whimsicality which is always there, but sometimes in revolting doses, and which so nearly ruins *Bleak House*. It is mentioned frequently but never discussed at length. As it is, the book is a little lop-sided and somewhat ruthless in its resolve to crush everything into the framework of the main theory. But it is an illuminating piece of work and should, most certainly, be read by all who are genuinely interested in Dickens. It is always stimulating even where acceptance is difficult.

FRANK CHAPMAN.

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THE FAITH OF A SCHOOLMASTER, by E. Sharwood Smith (Methuen, 6/-).

> 'Lord Cecil said he regarded the indifference to the suffering caused by road accidents as part of the general decay of morality and religion which was going on all over the world.'
>
> 'Some of you know the Scout Law: "One good turn a day." We can, all of us, understand that, if we have charity, no day can pass without our doing someone a good turn. We shall find that charity of heart fills the world with people who are happy to see us; who are jolly and friendly and generous; who will convince us, as the saying goes, that "we can believe in human nature."'

The first quotation is from a paper; the 'we' in the second is the parsonical second person—or rather, the pedagogic; which makes it worse, attendance if not attention being compulsory at school. The passage is in fact from the headmaster's end-of-term address in a large secondary school; it might equally have been uttered in many others.

The two passages are connected in more ways than one. The headmaster responsible for the second would claim, in all honesty, that he was trying to inculcate a moral or religious sense in his pupils. Sufficient introspection would probably reveal to him that he was also trying to pass on to them something of his own secret conviction of guilt. (His speech as a whole leaves no room for doubt). Such moral laceration seems to me wholly regrettable. A feverish, good turn a day Paulianity is no remedy for the decay alluded to by Lord Cecil; it is at once the result and a further cause of the decay. There must be many teachers who, while regarding as mistaken the method here employed, will agree that their chief aim as educators must be to arrest and counteract this decay, and that in this respect their undertaking is religious in character. So difficult a task is not simplified but complicated by indoctrination and moral exhortation.

To say that education has a religious aim is to invite misunderstanding. It is not necessarily equivalent to advocating religious periods and observances, still less to advocating teaching of dogma. These, however good in themselves, have in too many schools unfortunate consequences. They oblige some at least of

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the staff and pupils to subscribe to statements they believe (rightly or wrongly) to be demonstrably untrue ; they entail much emotional as well as intellectual falsity ; they give the occasion all too easily for a lashing up of virtue of the kind I have cited. For reasons such as these it has come about, I think, that religious observances have if anything a negative correlation with religious education.

Genuinely religious education—in the sense in which Lord Cecil is using the word, and in which Lawrence may be called a religious writer—is more than ever important as schools offer almost the only means of organized resistance to the forces of the new illiteracy. Though the word ' faith ' in the title of Mr. Sharwood Smith's book *The Faith of a Schoolmaster* has a more general meaning, the book is interesting largely as the account of an attempt to put into practice an essentially religious idea of education.

Mr. Smith, who became headmaster of Newbury Grammar School just as the 1902 Act came into force, describes the principles, inspired by Edmond Holmes, which guided his twenty-two years there. The chapter devoted explicitly to religious education is curiously negative and among the least satisfactory. Far more illuminating is the long introductory chapter ' Historical, Personal, General.' It is hard to do justice to this chapter in small space. It tells how Mr. Smith developed his school in defiance of disheartening difficulties, including apathy, officialdom, and an appalling financial situation. Possibly his greatest hindrance proved to be the spirit, or lack of a spirit, of the locality. At this point Mr. Smith gives a clear and telling description of Newbury as a parasitic or dormitory town, its tradesmen living on the business people and the business people living on London, uninterested in each other or the neighbourhood or anything nearer than the City. In such conditions no vigorous social life was possible. Mr. Smith, clearly aware of the importance of the social milieu, was also clearly aware of the decay that had set in in Newbury. But again the book is disappointing. There is no indication that the process is recognized as a more general one—that the meretricious shop-fronts are anything more than an accident, for instance ; and the important educational inference is nowhere explicitly drawn.

The poverty of local life was especially galling since Mr. Smith saw the Grammar School as a definite part of a larger national

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educational structure which might be based on the elementary schools. He set out to modify within his province the public school tradition, retaining those features which he considered good—and of which, in passing, he gives a more convincing account than better-known advocates—altering others. To this end various innovations were made at the school: a larger measure of freedom and self-government was allowed, dramatic methods were exploited to the full, internal exams. and directly religious teaching were minimized, punishments (with the exception however of a strange system of coloured stamps denoting praise or blame) were virtually abolished. All this is to the good; negative, perhaps, but at any rate the ground seems clear for positive education of a kind hinted at elsewhere in the book. The experiment is all the more valuable as it was carried out inside the State educational framework; for private schools, though they may be freer to make radical experiments, can gain a wide influence only by modifying in time the staple education of the State schools.

And yet, when we try to assess Mr. Smith's achievement, the task becomes curiously difficult. The author disarms criticism by his modesty in claiming only that the school was no worse than others, but some attempt at appraisal is necessary. There are several difficulties. First, the proof of a school is in its pupils, not merely when they leave but throughout life. Again, in educational discussion different educationalists use exactly the same terms to apply to widely different states of affairs; thus there must be few headmasters who would not claim that in their schools there was 'frank and friendly discussion' of sex, and yet . . . (For this reason matters trivial enough in themselves, but tangible, such as swearing and the use of 'sir,' have a use as litmus papers). Without a direct knowledge of the school one can hardly tell what value is to be attached to Mr. Smith's counters. A third more immediate difficulty is the air of indefiniteness or indecision which pervades the book. Except in the chapter on exams., which outlines a feasible alternative, Mr. Smith's terms are too vague and general; the promise implied on every page remains a promise to the end. Excellent hints are thrown out, and yet time and time again one is left wondering. Those coloured stamps sound very suspicious and the whole matter of coercion is inadequately dealt

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with. The merits of drama as a means to education are extolled but not clearly stated—for the argument that acting in the role of Oedipus will give relief to a boy with the familiar complex is a very questionable one. Clean dealing with sex is advocated, but with little indication of what constitutes the dealing or the cleanness ; and, what is disquieting, the adjective is not found necessary in any other connection. Examples could be multiplied.

Here I think is the great weakness of Mr. Smith's book. It is of little use to hint at reforms in education in such general terms ; reiterated generalities will not replace detailed description and analysis, which the book conspicuously lacks. Even the chapter defending the Classics in the curriculum, in which Mr. Smith is most on his own ground, is hazy. The method of study proposed approximates to that of the mother tongue. The old formal-training argument is abandoned, but it is not made clear what qualities the Classics foster which could not more economically be developed through the study of the mother tongue. It is in this chapter that Mr. Smith's scheme of values breaks down badly. His examples of classically-trained ' successes ' appear to be selected according to just those criteria of academic and worldly prowess which the author elsewhere rejects. Perhaps it is not fantastic to associate the dissatisfying vagueness of the book with (whilst not attributing it to) the author's Classical training. A sometimes over-conscious moderation, a dignity not always distinguishable from sedateness, an over-insistence on seemliness, a liking for Masefield and for Professor Murray's improvements on Euripides—these are other familiar signs ' not unconnected with ' a Classical bent.

Whatever the explanation, the professional reader on the look-out for tips and trying to sum up the book will be left with a query. But its kindly spirit may still be an inspiration. The excellent Postscript would alone justify the book. It is no merely assumed moderation which enables one whose life has been devoted to liberal teaching to survey the political Europe of to-day with so little bitterness. One cannot but respect deeply the detachment which Mr. Smith was able, by recourse to the Classics, to maintain through the war years.

RAYMOND O'MALLEY.

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